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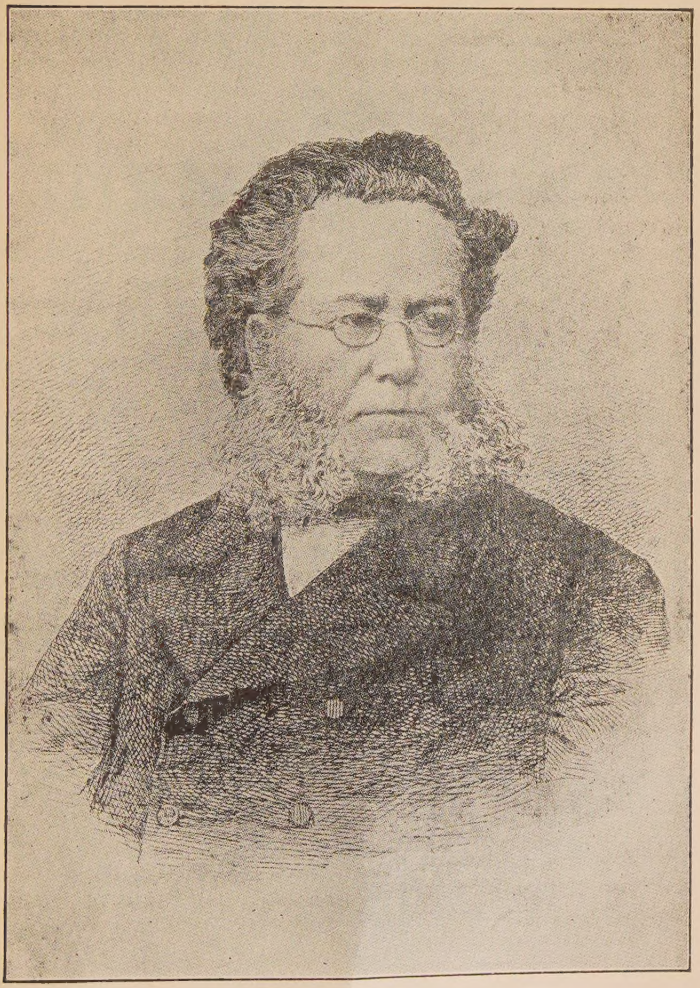
THE WORKS OF HENRIK IBSEN



HENRIK IBSEN

THE WORKS OF HENRIK IBSEN

One Volume Edition

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VOLUME I

Hedda Gabler

THE PERSONS OF THE PLAY.

EORGE TESMAN.

EDDA TESMAN, *his wife.*

ISS JULIANA TESMAN, *his aunt.*

RS. ELVSTED.

UDGE BRACK.

ILERT LÖVBORG.

ERTA, *servant at the Tesmans.*

he action takes place at Tesman's lla, in the west end of Christiania.

ACT I

SCENE—*A spacious, handsome, and stefully furnished drawing-room, ecorated in dark colours. In the back, wide doorway with curtains drawn ck, leading into a smaller room deco- ted in the same style as the drawing- om. In the right-hand wall of the ont room, a folding door leading out the hall. In the opposite wall, on e left, a glass door, also with cur- ins drawn back. Through the panes n be seen part of a verandah out- de, and trees covered with autumn liage. An oval table, with a cover it, and surrounded by chairs, stands ll forward. In front, by the wall on e right, a wide stove of dark porce- n, a high-backed arm-chair, a cush- ned foot-rest, and two foot-stools. A tee with a small round table in front it, fills the upper right-hand corner. front, on the left, a little way from e wall, a sofa. Further back than the glass door, a piano. On either side of the doorway at the back a whatnot with terra-cotta and majolica ornaments.—Against the back wall of the inner room a sofa, with a table, and one or two chairs. Over the sofa hangs the portrait of a handsome elderly man in a General's uniform. Over the table a hanging lamp, with an opal glass shade.—A number of bouquets are arranged about the drawing-room, in vases and glasses. Others lie upon the tables. The floors in both rooms are covered with thick carpets.—Morning light. The sun shines in through the glass door.*

MISS JULIANA TESMAN, *with her bonnet on and carrying a parasol, comes in from the hall, followed by* BERTA, *who carries a bouquet wrapped in paper.* MISS TESMAN *is a comely and pleasant-looking lady of about sixty-five. She is nicely but simply dressed in a grey walking-costume.* BERTA *is a middle-aged woman of plain and rather countrified appearance.*

MISS TES [*stops close to the door, listens, and says softly*]. Upon my word, I don't believe they are stirring yet!

BERTA [*also softly*]. I told you so, Miss. Remember how late the steamboat got in last night. And then, when they got home!—good Lord, what a lot the young mistress had to unpack before she could get to bed.

MISS TES. Well, well—let them have their sleep out. But let us see that they get a good breath of the fresh morning air when they do appear. [*She goes to the glass door and throws it open.*]

BERTA [*beside the table, at a loss what to do with the bouquet in her hand*]. I declare there isn't a bit of room left. I think I'll put it down here, Miss. [*She places it on the piano.*]

MISS TES. So you've got a new mistress now, my dear Berta. Heaven knows it was a wrench to me to part with you.

BERTA [*on the point of weeping*]. And do you think it wasn't hard for me too, Miss? After all the blessed years I've been with you and Miss Rina.

MISS TES. We must make the best of it, Berta. There was nothing else to be done. George can't do without you, you see—he absolutely can't. He has had you to look after him ever since he was a little boy.

BERTA. Ah, but, Miss Julia, I can't help thinking of Miss Rina lying helpless at home there, poor thing. And with only that new girl, too! She'll never learn to take proper care of an invalid.

MISS TES. Oh, I shall manage to train her. And of course, you know, I shall take most of it upon myself. You needn't be uneasy about my poor sister, my dear Berta.

BERTA. Well, but there's another thing, Miss. I'm so mortally afraid I shan't be able to suit the young mistress.

MISS TES. Oh, well—just a there may be one or two things—

BERTA. Most like she'll be t grand in her ways.

MISS TES. Well you can't v at that—General Gabler's dau Think of the sort of life she w customed to in her father's time. you remember how we used to s riding down the road along wi General? In that long black h and with feathers in her hat?

BERTA. Yes, indeed—I rem well enough—! But Good L should never have dreamt in thos that she and Master George woul a match of it.

MISS TES. Nor I.—But, by-t Berta—while I think of it: in you mustn't say Master George must say Dr. Tesman.

BERTA. Yes, the young m spoke of that too—last nigh moment they set foot in the hou it true then, Miss?

MISS TES. Yes, indeed it is. think, Berta—some foreign uni has made him a doctor—while been abroad, you understand. I heard a word about it, until h me himself upon the pier.

BERTA. Well, well, he's clever for anything, he is. But I didn' he'd have gone in for doctoring too.

MISS TES. No, no, it's not th of doctor he is. [*Nods signific* But let me tell you, we may h call him something still grander long.

BERTA. You don't say so! Wh that be, Miss?

MISS TES. [*smiling*]. H'm—wouldn't
u like to know! [*With emotion.*] Ah,
ar, dear—if my poor brother could
ly look up from his grave now, and
e what his little boy has grown into!
ooks around.] But bless me, Berta—
y have you done this? Taken the
intz cover off all the furniture?
BERTA. The mistress told me to. She
n't abide covers on the chairs, she
s.
MISS TES. Are they going to make
s their everyday sitting-room, then?
BERTA. Yes, that's what I understood
from the mistress. Master George—
e doctor—he said nothing.
GEORGE TESMAN *comes from the*
ht into the inner room, humming to
nself, and carrying an unstrapped
pty portmanteau. He is a middle-
ed, young-looking man of thirty-
ee, rather stout, with a round, open
erful face, fair hair and beard. He
ars spectacles, and is somewhat care-
sly dressed in comfortable indoor
thes.
MISS TES. Good morning, good
rning, George.
TES. [*in the doorway between the*
ms]. Aunt Julia! Dear Aunt Julia!
oes up to her and shakes hands
rmly.] Come all this way—so early!
?
MISS TES. Why, of course I had to
ne and see how you were getting on.
TES. In spite of your having had no
per night's rest?
MISS TES. Oh, that makes no dif-
ence to me.
TES. Well, I suppose you got home
right from the pier? Eh?
MISS TES. Yes, quite safely, thank
dness. Judge Brack was good
ugh to see me right to my door.

TES. We were so sorry we couldn't give you a seat in the carriage. But you saw what a pile of boxes Hedda had to bring with her.

MISS TES. Yes, she had certainly plenty of boxes.

BERTA [*to Tesman*]. Shall I go in and see if there's anything I can do for the mistress?

TES. No, thank you Berta—you needn't. She said she would ring if she wanted anything.

BERTA [*going towards the right*]. Very well.

TES. But look here—take this portmanteau with you.

BERTA [*taking it*]. I'll put it in the attic. [*She goes out by the hall door.*]

TES. Fancy, Auntie—I had the whole of that portmanteau chock full of copies of documents. You wouldn't believe how much I have picked up from all the archives I have been examining—curious old details that no one has had any idea of—

MISS TES. Yes, you don't seem to have wasted your time on your wedding trip, George.

TES. No, that I haven't. But do take off your bonnet, Auntie. Look here! Let me untie the strings—eh?

MISS TES. [*while he does so*]. Well, well—this is just as if you were still at home with us.

TES. [*with the bonnet in his hand, looks at it from all sides*]. Why, what a gorgeous bonnet you've been investing in!

MISS TES. I bought it on Hedda's account!

TES. On Hedda's account? Eh?

MISS TES. Yes, so that Hedda needn't be ashamed of me if we happened to go out together.

TES. [*patting her cheek*]. You always think of everything, Aunt Julia. [*Lays the bonnet on a chair beside the table.*] And now, look here—suppose we sit comfortably on the sofa and have a little chat, till Hedda comes. [*They seat themselves. She places her parasol in the corner of the sofa.*]

MISS TES. [*takes both his hands and looks at him.*] What a delight it is to have you again, as large as life, before my very eyes, George! My George—my poor brother's own boy!

TES. And it's a delight for me, too, to see you again, Aunt Julia! You, who have been father and mother in one to me.

MISS TES. Oh, yes, I know you will always keep a place in your heart for your old aunts.

TES. And what about Aunt Rina? No improvement—eh?

MISS TES. Oh, no—we can scarcely look for any improvement in her case, poor thing. There she lies, helpless, as she has lain for all these years. But heaven grant I may not lose her yet awhile! For if I did, I don't know what I should make of my life, George—especially now that I haven't you to look after any more.

TES. [*patting her back.*] There, there, there——!

MISS TES. [*suddenly changing her tone*], And to think that here you are a married man, George!—And that you should be the one to carry off Hedda Gabler—the beautiful Hedda Gabler! Only think of it—she, that was so beset with admirers!

TES. [*hums a little and smiles complacently*]. Yes, I fancy I have several good friends about town who would like to stand in my shoes—eh?

MISS TES. And then this fine wedding-tour you have had! More five—nearly six months—

TES. Well, for me it has b sort of tour of research as well. had to do so much grubbing a old records—and to read no e books too, Auntie.

MISS TES. Oh, yes, I suppo [*More confidentially, and lowerin voice a little.*] But listen now, —have you nothing—nothing s to tell me?

TES. As to our journey?

MISS TES. Yes.

TES. No, I don't know of an except what I have told you in m ters. I had a doctor's degree con on me—but that I told you yest

MISS TES. Yes, yes, you did what I mean is—haven't you any —expectations——?

TES. Expectations?

MISS TES. Why, you know, —I'm your old auntie!

TES. Why, of course I have ex tions.

MISS TES. Ah!

TES. I have every expectati being a professor one of these d

MISS TES. Oh, yes, a profess

TES. Indeed, I may say I am of it. But my dear Auntie—you all about that already!

MISS TES. [*laughing to herself*] of course I do. You are right [*Changing the subject.*] But w talking about your journey. I have cost a great deal of George?

TES. Well, you see—my hal travelling-scholarship went a goo

Miss Tes. But I can't understand ow you can have made it go far ough for two.

Tes. No, that's not so easy to under- and—eh?

Miss Tes. And especially travelling ith a lady—they tell me that makes ever so much more expensive.

Tes. Yes, of course—it makes it a ttle more expensive. But Hedda had have this trip, Auntie! She really ad to. Nothing else would have done.

Miss Tes. No, no, I suppose not. A edding-tour seems to be quite indis- ensable nowadays.—But tell me now— ave you gone thoroughly over the ouse yet?

Tes. Yes, you may be sure I have. have been afoot ever since daylight.

Miss Tes. And what do you think f it all?

Tes. I'm delighted! Quite delighted! nly I can't think what we are to do ith the two empty rooms between this ner parlour and Hedda's bedroom.

Miss Tes. [*laughing*]. Oh, my dear eorge, I dare say you may find some se for them—in the course of time.

Tes. Why of course you are quite ght, Aunt Julia! You mean as my brary increases—eh?

Miss Tes. Yes, quite so, my dear oy. It was your library I was think- g of.

Tes. I am specially pleased on edda's account. Often and often, be- re we were engaged, she said that e would never care to live anywhere t in Secretary Falk's villa.

Miss Tes. Yes, it was lucky that is very house should come into the arket, just after you had started.

Tes. Yes, Aunt Julia, the luck was our side, wasn't it—eh?

Miss Tes. But the expense, my dear George! You will find it very expen- sive, all this.

Tes. [*looks at her, a little cast down*]. Yes, I suppose I shall, Aunt!

Miss Tes. Oh, frightfully!

Tes. How much do you think? In round numbers?—Eh?

Miss Tes. Oh, I can't even guess until all the accounts come in.

Tes. Well, fortunately, Judge Brack has secured the most favourable terms for me,—so he said in a letter to Hedda.

Miss Tes. Yes, don't be uneasy, my dear boy.—Besides, I have given secu- rity for the furniture and all the car- pets.

Tes. Security? You? My dear Aunt Julia—what sort of security could you give?

Miss Tes. I have given a mortgage on our annuity.

Tes. [*jumps up*]. What! On your —and Aunt Rina's annuity!

Miss Tes. Yes, I knew of no other plan, you see.

Tes. [*placing himself before her*]. Have you gone out of your senses, Auntie? Your annuity—it's all that you and Aunt Rina have to live upon.

Miss Tes. Well, well, don't get so excited about it. It's only a matter of form you know—Judge Brack assured me of that. It was he that was kind enough to arrange the whole affair for me. A mere matter of form, he said.

Tes. Yes, that may be all very well. But nevertheless—

Miss Tes. You will have your own salary to depend upon now. And, good heavens, even if we did have to pay up a little——! To eke things out a

bit at the start——! Why, it would be nothing but a pleasure to us.

TES. Oh, Auntie—will you never be tired of making sacrifices for me!

MISS TES. [*rises and lays her hands on his shoulders*]. Have I had any other happiness in this world except to smooth your way for you, my dear boy? You, who have had neither father nor mother to depend on. And now we have reached the goal, George! Things have looked black enough for us, sometimes; but, thank heaven, now you have nothing to fear.

TES. Yes, it is really marvelous how everything has turned out for the best.

MISS TES. And the people who opposed you—who wanted to bar the way for you—now you have them at your feet. They have fallen, George. Your most dangerous rival—his fall was the worst.—And now he has to lie on the bed he has made for himself—poor misguided creature.

TES. Have you heard anything of Eilert? Since I went away, I mean.

MISS TES. Only that he is said to have published a new book.

TES. What! Eilert Lövborg! Recently—eh?

MISS TES. Yes, so they say. Heaven knows whether it can be worth anything! Ah, when your new book appears—that will be another story, George! What is it to be about?

TES. It will deal with the domestic industries of Brabant during the Middle Ages.

MISS TES. Fancy—to be able to write on such a subject as that!

TES. However, it may be some time before the book is ready. I have all these collections to arrange first, you see.

MISS TES. Yes, collecting and arranging—no one can beat you at that. There you are my poor brother's own son.

TES. I am looking forward eagerly to setting to work at it; especially now that I have my own delightful home to work in.

MISS TES. And, most of all, now that you have got the wife of your heart, my dear George.

TES. [*embracing her*]. Oh, yes, yes Aunt Julia. Hedda—she is the best part of all! [*Looks towards the doorway.*] I believe I hear her coming—eh?

HEDDA *enters from the left through the inner room. She is a woman of nine-and-twenty. Her face and figure show refinement and distinction. Her complexion is pale and opaque. Her steel-grey eyes express a cold, unruffled repose. Her hair is of an agreeable medium brown, but not particularly abundant. She is dressed in a tasteful, somewhat loose-fitting morning gown.*

MISS TES. [*going to meet* HEDDA] Good morning, my dear Hedda! Good morning, and a hearty welcome.

HEDDA [*holds out her hand*]. Good morning, dear Miss Tesman! So early a call! That is kind of you.

MISS TES. [*with some embarrassment*]. Well—has the bride slept well in her new home?

HEDDA. Oh yes, thanks. Passably.

TES. [*laughing*]. Passably! Come that's good, Hedda! You were sleeping like a stone when I got up.

HEDDA. Fortunately. Of course one

always to accustom one's self to
surroundings. Miss Tesman—
by little. [*Looking towards the*
Oh—there the servant has gone
opened the verandah door, and let
whole flood of sunshine.

ISS TES. [*going towards the door.*]
, then, we will shut it.

EDDA. No, no, not that! Tesman,
se draw the curtains. That will
a softer light.

ES. [*at the door.*] All right—all
. There now, Hedda, now you
both shade and fresh air.

EDDA. Yes, fresh air we certainly
have, with all these stacks of
ers—— But—won't you sit down,
Tesman?

ISS TES. No, thank you. Now that
ve seen that everything is all right
—thank heaven!—I must be get-
home again. My sister is lying
ing for me, poor thing.

ES. Give her my very best love,
tie; and say I shall look in and see
ater in the day.

ISS TES. Yes, yes, I'll be sure to
her. But by-the-bye, George—
ing in her dress pocket]—I have
you here.

ES. What is it, Auntie? Eh?

ISS TES. [*produces a flat parcel*
pped in newspaper and hands it to
] Look here, my dear boy.

ES. [*opening the parcel.*] Well, I
re!—Have you really saved them
ne, Aunt Julia! Hedda! isn't this
hing—eh?

EDDA [*beside the whatnot on the*
.] Well, what is it?

ES. My old morning-shoes! My
ers.

EDDA. Indeed. I remember you
often spoke of them while we were abroad.

TES. Yes, I missed them terribly. [*Goes up to her.*] Now you shall see them Hedda!

HEDDA [*going towards the stove.*] Thanks, I really don't care about it.

TES. [*following her.*] Only think—ill as she was, Aunt Rina embroidered these for me. Oh you can't think how many associations cling to them.

HEDDA [*at the table.*] Scarcely for me.

MISS TES. Of course not for Hedda, George.

TES. Well, but now that she belongs to the family, I thought——

HEDDA [*interrupting.*] We shall never get on with this servant, Tesman.

MISS TES. Not get on with Berta?

TES. Why, dear, what puts that in your head? Eh?

HEDDA [*pointing.*] Look there! She has left her old bonnet lying about on a chair.

TES. [*in consternation, drops the slippers on the floor.*] Why, Hedda—

HEDDA. Just fancy, if any one should come in and see it!

TES. But Hedda—that's Aunt Julia's bonnet.

HEDDA. Is it!

MISS TES. [*taking up the bonnet.*] Yes, indeed it's mine. And, what's more, it's not old, Madame Hedda.

HEDDA. I really did not look closely at it, Miss Tesman.

MISS TES. [*trying on the bonnet.*] Let me tell you it's the first time I have worn it—the very first time.

TES. And a very nice bonnet it is too—quite a beauty!

MISS TES. Oh, it's no such great things, George. [*Looks around her.*] My parasol——? Ah, here. [*Takes it.*] For this is mine too—[*mutters*] —not Berta's.

TES. A new bonnet and a new parasol! Only think, Hedda!

HEDDA. Very handsome indeed.

TES. Yes, isn't it? Eh? But Auntie, take a good look at Hedda before you go! See how handsome she is!

MISS TES. Oh, my dear boy there's nothing new in that. Hedda was always lovely. [*She nods and goes towards the right.*]

TES. [*following*]. Yes, but have you noticed what splendid condition she is in? How she has filled out on the journey?

HEDDA [*crossing the room*]. Oh, do be quiet—!

MISS TES. [*who has stopped and turned*]. Filled out?

TES. Of course you don't notice it so much now that she has that dress on. But I, who can see—

HEDDA [*at the glass door, impatiently.*] Oh, you can't see anything.

TES. It must be the mountain air in the Tyrol—

HEDDA [*curtly, interrupting.*] I am exactly as I was when I started.

TES. So you insist; but I'm quite certain you are not. Don't you agree with me, Auntie?

MISS TES. [*who has been gazing at her with folded hands.*] Hedda is lovely—lovely—lovely. [*Goes up to her, takes her head between both hands, draws it downwards, and kisses her hair.*] God bless and preserve Hedda Tesman—for George's sake.

HEDDA [*gently freeing herself.*] —! Let me go.

MISS TES. [*in quiet emotion.*] I sh not let a day pass without coming see you.

TES. No you won't will you, Aunt Eh?

MISS TES. Good-bye—good-bye! [*She goes out by the hall door.* T MAN *accompanies her. The d remains half open.* TESMAN *can heard repeating his message Aunt Rina and his thanks for slippers.*

[*In the meantime,* HEDDA *wa about the room raising her arms clenching her hands as if in desp ation. Then she flings back curtains from the glass door, stands there looking out.*

[*Presently* TESMAN *returns closes the door behind him.*

TES. [*picks up the slippers from floor.*] What are you looking Hedda?

HEDDA [*once more calm and mist of herself.*] I am only looking at leaves. They are so yellow—so w ered.

TES. [*wraps up the slippers and them on the table.*] Well you see, are well into September now.

HEDDA [*again restless.*] Yes, think of it! —Already in—in Sept ber.

TES. Don't you think Aunt Ju manner was strange, dear? Al solemn? Can you imagine what the matter with her? Eh?

HEDDA. I scarcely know her, see. Is she often like that?

TES. No, not as she was today.

DDA [*leaving the glass door*]. Do think she was annoyed about the et?

S. Oh, scarcely at all. Perhaps le, just at the moment—

DDA. But what an idea, to pitch onnet about in the drawing-room! ne does that sort of thing.

S. Well you may be sure Aunt won't do it again.

DDA. In any case, I shall manage ke my peace with her.

S. Yes, my dear, good Hedda, if only would.

DDA. When you call this after- you might invite her to spend vening here.

S. Yes, that I will. And there's thing more you could do that l delight her heart.

DDA. What is it?

S. If you could only prevail on elf to say *du* to her. For my Hedda? Eh?

DDA. No no, Tesman—you really 't ask that of me. I have told o already. I shall try to call her t"; and you must be satisfied hat.

S. Well, well. Only I think now you belong to the family, you—

DDA. H'm—I can't in the least see [*She goes up towards the middle ay*].

. [*after a pause*]. Is there any- the matter with you, Hedda?

DDA. I'm only looking at my old It doesn't go at all well with e other things.

. The first time I draw my , we'll see about exchanging it.

DDA. No, no—no exchanging. I want to part with it. Suppose we put it there in the inner room, and then get another here in its place. When it's convenient, I mean.

TES. [*a little taken aback*]. Yes—of course we could do that.

HEDDA [*takes up the bouquet from the piano*]. These flowers were not here last night when we arrived.

TES. Aunt Julia must have brought them for you.

HEDDA [*examining the bouquet*]. A visiting-card. [*Takes it out and reads:*] "Shall return later in the day." Can you guess whose card it is?

TES. No. Whose? Eh?

HEDDA. The name is Mrs. Elvsted."

TES. Is it really? Sheriff Elvsted's wife? Miss Rysing that was.

HEDDA. Exactly. The girl with the irritating hair, that she was always showing off. An old flame of yours I've been told.

TES. [*laughing*]. Oh, that didn't last long; and it was before I knew you, Hedda. But fancy her being in town!

HEDDA. It's odd that she should call upon us. I have scarcely seen her since we left school.

TES. I haven't seen her either for—heaven knows how long. I wonder how she can endure to live in such an out-of-the-way hole—eh?

HEDDA [*after a moment's thought says suddenly*]. Tell me, Tesman—isn't it somewhere near there that he—that—Eilert Lövborg is living?

TES. Yes, he is somewhere in that part of the country.

BERTA *enters by the hall door.*

BERTA. That lady, ma'am, that brought some flowers a little while ago, is here again. [*Pointing.*] The flowers you have in your hand, ma'am.

HEDDA. Ah, is she? Well, please show her in.

BERTA *opens the door for* MRS. ELVSTED, *and goes out herself.*—MRS. ELVSTED *is a woman of fragile figure, with pretty, soft features. Her eyes are light blue, large, round, and somewhat prominent, with a startled, inquiring expression. Her hair is remarkably light, almost flaxen, and unusually abundant and wavy. She is a couple of years younger than* HEDDA. *She wears a dark visiting dress, tasteful, but not quite in the latest fashion.*

HEDDA [*receives her warmly*]. How do you do, my dear Mrs. Elvsted? It's delightful to see you again.

MRS. ELVS. [*nervously struggling for self-control*]. Yes, it's a very long time since we met.

TES. [*gives her his hand*]. And we too—eh?

HEDDA. Thanks for your lovely flowers—

MRS. ELVS. Oh, not at all— I would have come straight here yesterday afternoon; but I heard that you were away—

TES. Have you just come to town? Eh?

MRS. ELVS. I arrived yesterday, about midday. Oh, I was quite in despair when I heard that you were not at home.

HEDDA. In despair! How so?

TES. Why, my dear Mrs. Hysing—I mean Mrs. Elvsted—

HEDDA. I hope that you are not in any trouble?

MRS. ELVS. Yes, I am. And I don't know another living creature here that I can turn to.

HEDDA [*laying the bouquet on the table*]. Come—let us sit here on the sofa—

MRS. ELVS. Oh, I am too restless to sit down.

HEDDA. Oh, no, you're not. Come here. [*She draws* MRS. ELVS. *down upon the sofa and sits at her side.*]

TES. Well? What is it, Mrs. Elvsted?

HEDDA. Has anything particular happened to you at home?

MRS. ELVS. Yes—and no. Oh—I am so anxious that you should not misunderstand me—

HEDDA. Then your best plan is to tell us the whole story, Mrs. Elvsted.

TES. I suppose that's what you have come for—eh?

MRS. ELVS. Yes, yes—of course it is. Well then, I must tell you—if you don't already know—that Eilert Lövborg is in town, too.

HEDDA. Lövborg—!

TES. What! Has Eilert Lövborg come back? Fancy that, Hedda!

HEDDA. Well, well—I hear it.

MRS. ELVS. He has been here a week already. Just fancy—a whole week! In this terrible town, alone! With so many temptations on all sides.

HEDDA. But my dear Mrs. Elvsted—how does he concern you so much?

MRS. ELVS. [*Looks at her with startled air, and says rapidly.*] He was the children's tutor.

HEDDA. Your children's?

MRS. ELVS. My husband's. I have none.

HEDDA. Your step-children's, then?

MRS. ELVS. Yes.

TES. [*somewhat hesitantly*]. The was he—I don't know how to expre

was he—regular enough in his
ts to be fit for the post? Eh?

RS. ELVS. For the last two years
conduct has been irreproachable.

ES. Has it indeed? Fancy that,
da!

EDDA. I hear it.

RS. ELVS. Perfectly irreproachable,
sure you! In every respect. But
he same—now that I know he is
—in this great town—and with a
e sum of money in his hands—I
t help being in mortal fear for

ES. Why did he not remain where
vas? With you and your husband?

RS. ELVS. After his book was pub-
ed he was too restless and unsettled
emain with us.

ES. Yes, by-the-bye, Aunt Julia
me he had published a new book.

RS. ELVS. Yes, a big book, dealing
the march of civilisation—in broad
ine, as it were. It came out about
rtnight ago. And since it has sold
well, and been so much read—and
le such a sensation—

ES. Has it indeed? It must be
ething he has had lying by since
better days.

RS. ELVS. Long ago, you mean?

ES. Yes.

RS. ELVS. No, he has written it all
e he has been with us—within the
year.

ES. Isn't that good news, Hedda?
nk of that.

RS. ELVS. Ah, yes, if only it would
!

EDDA. Have you seen him here in
n?

RS. ELVS. No, not yet. I have had the greatest difficulty in finding out his address. But this morning I discovered it at last.

HEDDA [*looks searchingly at her*]. Do you know, it seems to me a little odd of your husband—h'm—

MRS. ELVS. [*starting nervously*]. Of my husband! What?

HEDDA. That he should send you to town on such an errand—that he does not come himself and look after his friend.

MRS. ELVS. Oh no, no—my husband has no time. And besides, I—I have some shopping to do.

HEDDA [*with a slight smile*]. Ah, that is a different matter.

MRS. ELVS. [*rising quickly and uneasily*]. And now I beg and implore you, Mr. Tesman—receive Eilert Lövborg kindly if he comes to you! And that he is sure to do. You see you were such great friends in the old days. And then you are interested in the same studies—the same branch of science—so far as I can understand.

TES. We used to be, at any rate.

MRS. ELVS. That is why I beg so earnestly that you—you too—will keep a sharp eye upon him. Oh, you will promise me that, Mr. Tesman—won't you?

TES. With the greatest of pleasure, Mrs. Rysing—

HEDDA. Elvsted.

TES. I assure you that I shall do all I possibly can for Eilert. You may rely upon me.

MRS. ELVS. Oh, how very, very kind of you! [*Presses his hands.*] Thanks, thanks, thanks! [*Frightened.*] You see, my husband is very fond of him!

HEDDA [*rising*]. You ought to write

to him, Tesman. Perhaps he may not care to come to you of his own accord.

TES. Well, perhaps it would be the right thing to do, Hedda? Eh?

HEDDA. And the sooner the better. Why not at once?

MRS. ELVS. [*imploringly*]. Oh, if you only would!

TES. I'll write this moment. Have you his address, Mrs.—Mrs. Elvsted.

MRS. ELVS. Yes. [*Takes a slip of paper from her pocket, and hands it to him.*] Here it is.

TES. Good, good. Then I'll go in— [*Looks about him.*] By-the-bye,—my slippers? Oh, here. [*Takes the packet, and is about to go.*]

HEDDA. Be sure to write him a cordial, friendly letter. And a good long one, too.

TES. Yes, I will.

MRS. ELVS. But please, please don't say a word to show that I have suggested it.

TES. No, how could you think I would? Eh? [*He goes out to the right, through the inner room.*]

HEDDA [*goes up to* MRS. ELVS., *smiles and says in a low voice.*] There. We have killed two birds with one stone.

MRS. ELVS. What do you mean?

HEDDA. Could you not see that I wanted him to go?

MRS. ELVS. Yes, to write the letter—

HEDDA. And that I might speak to you alone.

MRS. ELVS. [*confused*]. About the same thing?

HEDDA. Precisely.

MRS. ELVS. [*apprehensively*]. But there is nothing more, Mrs. Tesman! Absolutely nothing!

HEDDA. Oh, yes, but there is. There is a great deal more—I can see that. Sit here— and we'll have a cosy, confidential chat. [*She forces* MRS. ELVS. *to sit in the easy-chair beside the stove, and seats herself on one of the footstools.*]

MRS. ELVS. [*anxiously looking at her watch*]. But, my dear Mrs. Tesman— I was really on the point of going

HEDDA. Oh, you can't be in such a hurry.— Well? Now tell me something about your life at home.

MRS. ELVS. Oh, that is just what I care least to speak about.

HEDDA. But to me, dear——? Why weren't we school fellows?

MRS. ELVS. Yes, but you were in the class above me. Oh, how dreadfully afraid of you I was then!

HEDDA. Afraid of me?

MRS. ELVS. *Yes*, dreadfully. For when we met on the stairs you used always to pull my hair.

HEDDA. Did I, really?

MRS. ELVS. Yes, and once you said you would burn it off my head.

HEDDA. Oh, that was all nonsense of course.

MRS. ELVS. Yes, but I was so silly in those days.—And since then, too— we have drifted so far—far apart from each other. Our circles have been so entirely different.

HEDDA. Well then, we must try to drift together again. Now listen! At school we said *du* to each other; and we called each other by our Christian names——

MRS. ELVS. No, I am sure you must be mistaken.

HEDDA. No, not at all! I can remember quite distinctly. So now we are going to renew our old friendship. [*Draws the footstool closer to* MRS.

…].] There now! [*Kisses her cheek.*] …must say *du* to me and call me …la.

…RS. ELVS. [*presses and pats her …ls*]. Oh, how good and kind you … I am not used to such kindness.

…EDDA. There, there, there! And I … say *du* to you, as in the old days, … call you my dear Thora.

…RS. ELVS. My name is Thea.

…EDDA. Why, of course! I meant …a. [*Looks at her compassionately.*] … you are not accustomed to good- … and kindness, Thea? Not in your … home?

…RS. ELVS. Oh, if I only had a …e? But I haven't any; I have …r had a home.

…EDDA [*looks at her for a moment.*] …most suspected as much.

…RS. ELVS. [*gazing helplessly before …*. Yes—yes—yes.

…EDDA. I don't quite remember— … it not as housekeeper that you … went to Mr. Elvsted's?

…RS. ELVS. I really went as gover- …. But his wife—his late wife— … an invalid,—and rarely left her …n. So I had to look after the house- …oing as well.

…EDDA. And then—at last—you be- …e mistress of the house.

…RS. ELVS. [*sadly*]. Yes, I did.

…EDDA. Let me see—about how long … was that?

…RS. ELVS. My marriage?

…EDDA. Yes.

…RS. ELVS. Five years ago.

…EDDA. To be sure; it must be that.

…RS. ELVS. Oh, those five years—! …at all events the last two or three …hem! Oh, if you could only ima- ——

HEDDA [*giving her a little slap on the hand*]. De? Fie, Thea!

MRS. ELVS. Yes, yes, I will try—— Well if—you could only imagine and understand——

HEDDA [*lightly*]. Eilert Lövborg has been in your neighborhood about three years, hasn't he?

MRS. ELVS. [*looks at her doubtfully*]. Eilert Lövborg? Yes—he has.

HEDDA. Had you known him before, in town here?

MRS. ELVS. Scarcely at all. I mean —I knew him by name of course.

HEDDA. But you saw a good deal of him in the country?

MRS. ELVS. Yes, he came to us every day. You see, he gave the children lessons; for in the long run I couldn't manage it all myself.

HEDDA. No, that's clear.—And your husband——? I suppose he is often away from home?

MRS. ELVS. Yes. Being sheriff, you know, he has to travel about a good deal in his district.

HEDDA [*leaning against the arm of the chair*]. Thea—my poor, sweet Thea —now you must tell me everything—exactly as it stands.

MRS. ELVS. Well then, you must question me.

HEDDA. What sort of man is your husband, Thea? I mean—you know—in everyday life. Is he kind to you?

MRS. ELVS. [*evasively*]. I am sure he means well in everything.

HEDDA. I should think he must be altogether too old for you. There is at least twenty years' difference between you, is there not?

MRS. ELVS. [*irritably*]. Yes, that is true, too. Everything about him is

repellent to me! We have not a thought in common. We have no single point of sympathy—he and I.

HEDDA. But is he not fond of you all the same? In his own way.

MRS. ELVS. Oh, I really don't know. I think he regards me simply as a useful property. And then it doesn't cost much to keep me. I am not expensive.

HEDDA. That is stupid of you.

MRS. ELVS. [*shakes her head*]. It cannot be otherwise—not with him. I don't think he really cares for any one but himself—and perhaps a little for the children.

HEDDA. And for Eilert Lövborg, Thea.

MRS. ELVS. [*looking at her*]. For Eilert Lövborg? What put that into your head?

HEDDA. Well, my dear—I should say, when he sends you after him all the way to town——[*smiling almost imperceptibly.*] And besides, you said so yourself, to Tesman.

MRS. ELVS. [*with a little nervous twitch*]. Did I? Yes, I suppose I did. [*Vehemently, but not loudly.*] No—I may just as well make a clean breast of it at once! For it must all come out in any case.

HEDDA. Why, my dear Thea——?

MRS. ELVS. Well, to make a long story short: My husband did not know that I was coming.

HEDDA. What! Your husband didn't know it!

MRS. ELVS. No, of course not. For that matter, he was away from home himself—he was travelling. Oh, I could bear it no longer, Hedda! I couldn't indeed—so utterly alone as I should have been in future.

HEDDA. Well? And then?

MRS. ELVS. So I put together some of my things—what I needed most—as quietly as possible. And then I left the house.

HEDDA. Without a word?

MRS. ELVS. Yes—and took the train straight to town.

HEDDA. Why, my dear, good Thea—to think of you daring to do it!

MRS. ELVS. [*rises and moves about the room*]. What else could I possibly do?

HEDDA. But what do you think your husband will say when you go home again?

MRS. ELVS. [*at the table, looks at her*]. Back to him?

HEDDA. Of course.

MRS. ELVS. I shall never go back to him again.

HEDDA [*rising and going toward her*]. Then you have left your home—for good and all?

MRS. ELVS. Yes. There was nothing else to be done.

HEDDA. But then—to take flight so openly.

MRS. ELVS. Oh, it's impossible to keep things of that sort secret.

HEDDA. But what do you think people will say of you, Thea?

MRS. ELVS. They may say what they like, for aught *I* care. [*Seats herself wearily and sadly on the sofa.*] I have done nothing but what I had to do.

HEDDA [*after a short silence*]. And what are your plans now? What do you think of doing?

MRS. ELVS. I don't know yet. I only know this, that I must live here, where Eilert Lövborg is—if I am to live at all.

HEDDA [*takes a chair from the table, s herself beside her, and strokes her ds*]. My dear Thea—how did this— friendship—between you and Eilert rborg come about?

MRS. ELVS. Oh, it grew up gradually. ained a sort of influence over him.

HEDDA. Indeed?

MRS. ELVS. He gave up his old its. Not because I asked him to, I never dared do that. But of rse he saw how repulsive they were me; and so he dropped them.

HEDDA [*concealing an involuntary le of scorn*]. Then you have re- med him—as the saying goes—my le Thea.

MRS. ELVS. So he says himself, at rate. And he, on his side, has de a real human being of me— ght me to think, and to understand many things.

HEDDA. Did he give you lessons too, n?

MRS. ELVS. No, not exactly lessons. t he talked to me—talked about such infinity of things. And then came lovely, happy time when I began share in his work—when he allowed to help him!

HEDDA. Oh, he did, did he?

MRS. ELVS. Yes! He never wrote thing without my assistance.

HEDDA. You were two good com- des, in fact?

MRS. ELVS. [*eagerly*]. Comrades! s, fancy, Hedda—that is the very rd he used!—Oh, I ought to feel rfectly happy; and yet I cannot; for don't know how long it will last.

HEDDA. Are you no surer of him n that?

MRS. ELVS. [*gloomily*]. A woman's shadow stands between Eilert Lövborg and me.

HEDDA [*looks at her anxiously*]. Who can that be?

MRS. ELVS. I don't know. Some one he knew in his—in his past. Some one he has never been able wholly to forget.

HEDDA. What has he told you—about this?

MRS. ELVS. He has only once—quite vaguely—alluded to it.

HEDDA. Well! And what did he say?

MRS. ELVS. He said that when they parted, she threatened to shoot him with a pistol.

HEDDA [*with cool composure*]. Oh, nonsense! No one does that sort of thing here.

MRS. ELVS. No. And that is why I think it must have been that red-haired singing woman whom he once—

HEDDA. Yes, very likely.

MRS. ELVS. For I remember they used to say of her that she carried loaded firearms.

HEDDA. Oh—then of course it must have been she.

MRS. ELVS. [*wringing her hands*]. And now just fancy. Hedda—I hear that this singing-woman—that she is in town again! Oh, I don't know what to do——

HEDDA [*glancing towards the inner room*]. Hush! Here comes Tesman. [*Rises and whispers.*] Thea—all this must remain between you and me.

MRS. ELVS. [*springing up*]. Oh, yes, yes! for heaven's sake——!

GEORGE TESMAN, *with a letter in his hand, comes from the right through the inner room.*

TES. There now—the epistle is finished.

HEDDA. That's right. And now Mrs. Elvsted is just going. Wait a moment—I'll go with you to the garden gate.

TES. Do you think Berta could post the letter, Hedda dear?

HEDDA [*takes it*]. I will tell her to.

BERTA *enters from the hall.*

BERTA. Judge Brack wishes to know if Mrs. Tesman will receive him.

HEDDA. Yes, ask Judge Brack to come in. And look here—put this letter in the post.

BERTA. [*taking the letter*]. Yes, ma'am. [*She opens the door for* JUDGE BRACK *and goes out herself.*] BRACK *is a man of forty-five; thick-set, but well-built and elastic in his movements. His face is roundish with an aristocratic profile. His hair is short, still almost black, and carefully dressed. His eyes are lively and sparkling. His eyebrows thick. His moustaches are also thick, with short-cut ends. He wears a well-cut walking-suit, a little too youthful for his age. He uses an eyeglass, which he now and then lets drop.*

BRACK [*with his hat in his hand, bowing*]. May one venture to call so early in the day?

HEDDA. Of course one may.

TES. [*presses his hand*]. You are welcome at any time. [*Introducing him.*] Judge Brack—Miss Rysing——

HEDDA. Oh——!

BRACK [*bowing*]. Ah—delighted——

HEDDA [*looks at him and laughs*]. It's nice to have a look at you by daylight, Judge!

BRACK. Do you find me—altered?

HEDDA. A little younger, I think.

BRACK. Thank you so much.

TES. But what do you think of Hedda—eh? Doesn't she look flourishing? She has actually——

HEDDA. Oh, do leave me alone. You haven't thanked Judge Brack for all the trouble he has taken——

BRACK. Oh, nonsense—it was a pleasure to me——

HEDDA. Yes, you are a friend indeed. But here stands Thea all impatience to be off—so *au revoir* Judge. I shall be back again presently. [*Mutual salutations.* MRS. ELVSTED and HEDDA *go out by the hall door.*]

BRACK. Well,—is your wife tolerably satisfied——

TES. Yes, we can't thank you sufficiently. Of course she talks of a little re-arrangement here and there; and one or two things are still wanting. We shall have to buy some additional trifles.

BRACK. Indeed!

TES. But we won't trouble you about these things. Hedda says she herself will look after what is wanting—Shan't we sit down? Eh?

BRACK. Thanks, for a moment. [*Seats himself beside the table.*] There is something I wanted to speak to you about, my dear Tesman.

TES. Indeed? Ah, I understand. [*Seating himself.*] I suppose it's the serious part of the frolic that is coming now. Eh?

BRACK. Oh, the money question is not so very pressing; though, for that matter, I wish we had gone a little more economically to work.

TES. But that would never have done, you know! Think of Hedda, my dear fellow! You, who know her so well——. I couldn't possibly ask her

put up with a shabby style of living!

BRACK. No, no—that is just the difficulty.

TES. And then—fortunately—it can't long before I receive my appointment.

BRACK. Well, you see—such things often apt to hang fire for a time.

TES. Have you heard anything inite? Eh?

BRACK. Nothing exactly definite—*interrupting himself.*] But, by-the-—I have one piece of news for you.

TES. Well?

BRACK. Your old friend, Eilert vborg, has returned to town.

TES. I know that already.

BRACK. Indeed! How did you learn

TES. From the lady who went out h Hedda.

BRACK. Really? What was her me? I didn't quite catch it.

TES. Mrs. Elvsted.

BRACK. Aha—Sheriff Elvsted's wife? course—he has been living up in ir regions.

TES. And fancy—I'm delighted to ar that he is quite a reformed char-er!

BRACK. So they say.

TES. And then he has published a w book—eh?

BRACK. Yes, indeed he has.

TES. And I hear it has made some sation!

BRACK. Quite an unusual sensation.

TES. Fancy—isn't that good news! man of such extraordinary talents—felt so grieved to think that he had ne irretrievably to ruin.

BRACK. That was what everybody ought.

TES. But I cannot imagine what he will take to now! How in the world will he be able to make his living? Eh?

[*During the last words,* HEDDA *has entered by the hall door.*]

HEDDA [*To* BRACK, *laughing with a touch of scorn*]. Tesman is forever worrying about how people are to make their living.

TES. Well, you see, dear—we were talking about poor Eilert Lövborg.

HEDDA [*glancing at him rapidly*]. Oh, indeed? [*Seats herself in the arm-chair beside the stove and asks indifferently*:] What is the matter with him?

TES. Well—no doubt he has run through all his property long ago; and he can scarcely write a new book every year—eh? So I really can't see what is to become of him.

BRACK. Perhaps I can give you some information on that point.

TES. Indeed!

BRACK. You must remember that his relations have a good deal of influence.

TES. Oh, his relations, unfortunately, have entirely washed their hands of him.

BRACK. At one time they called him the hope of the family.

TES. At one time, yes! But he has put an end to all that.

HEDDA. Who knows? [*With a slight smile.*] I hear they have reclaimed him up at Sheriff Elvsted's——

BRACK. And then this book that he has published——

TES. Well, well, I hope to goodness they may find something for him to do. I have just written to him. I asked him to come and see us this evening, Hedda dear.

BRACK. But, my dear fellow, you are booked for my bachelors' party this evening. You promised on the pier last night.

HEDDA. Had you forgotten, Tesman?

TES. Yes, I had utterly forgotten.

BRACK. But it doesn't matter, for you may be sure he won't come.

TES. What makes you think that? Eh?

BRACK [*with a little hesitation, rising and resting his hands on the back of his chair*]. My dear Tesman—and you too, Mrs. Tesman—I think I ought not to keep you in the dark about something that—that——

TES. That concerns Eilert——?

BRACK. Both you and him.

TES. Well, my dear Judge, out with it.

BRACK. You must be prepared to find your appointment deferred longer than you desired or expected.

TES. [*jumping up uneasily*]. Is there some hitch about it? Eh?

BRACK. The nomination may perhaps be made conditional on the result of a competition——

TES. Competition! Think of that, Hedda!

HEDDA [*leans farther back in the chair*]. Aha—aah!

TES. But who can my competitor be? Surely not——?

BRACK. Yes, precisely—Eilert Lövborg.

TES. [*clasping his hands*]. No, no—it's quite inconceivable! Quite impossible! Eh?

BRACK. H'm—that is what it may come to, all the same.

TES. Well but, Judge Brack—it would show the most incredible lack of consideration for me. [*Gesticulates with his arms.*] For—just think—I'm a married man. We have been married on the strength of these prospects, Hedda and I; and run deep into debt; and borrowed money from Aunt Julia too. Good heavens, they had as good as promised me the appointment. Eh?

BRACK. Well, well, well—no doubt you will get it in the end; only after a contest.

HEDDA [*immovable in her arm-chair*]. Fancy, Tesman, there will be a sort of sporting interest in that.

TES. Why, my dearest Hedda, how can you be so indifferent about it.

HEDDA [*as before*]. I am not at all indifferent. I am most eager to see who wins.

BRACK. In any case, Mrs. Tesman, it is best that you should know how matters stand. I mean—before you set about the little purchases I hear you are threatening.

HEDDA. This can make no difference.

BRACK. Indeed! Then I have no more to say. Good-bye! [*To* TES.]. I shall look in on my way back from my afternoon walk, and take you home with me.

TES. Oh yes, yes—your news has quite upset me.

HEDDA [*reclining, holds out her hand*]. Good-bye, Judge; and be sure you call in the afternoon.

BRACK. Many thanks. Good-bye, good-bye!

TES. [*accompanying him to the door*]. Good-bye, my dear Judge! You must really excuse me— [JUDGE BRACK *goes out by the hall door.*]

TES. [*crosses the room*]. Oh, Hedda—one should never rush into adventures. Eh?

[EDDA [*looks at him smiling*]. Do
u do that?

ES. Yes, dear—there is no denying
was adventurous to go and marry
set up house upon mere expecta-
s.

[EDDA. Perhaps you are right there.

ES. Well—at all events, we have
delightful home, Hedda! Fancy,
home we both dreamed of—the
ne we were in love with, I may al-
t say. Eh?

[EDDA [*rising slowly and wearily*].
was part of our compact that we
e to go into society—to keep open
se.

'ES. Yes, if you only knew how I
been looking forward to it! Fancy
o see you as hostess—in a select
le? Eh? Well, well, well—for the
sent we shall have to get on with-
society, Hedda—only to invite
nt Julia now and then.—Oh, I in-
ded you to lead such an utterly
erent life, dear——!

HEDDA. Of course I cannot have my
n in livery just yet.

'ES. Oh no, unfortunately. It would
out of the question for us to keep
ootman, you know.

HEDDA. And the saddle-horse I was
have had——

TES. [*aghast*]. The saddle-horse!

HEDDA. ——I suppose I must not
nk of that now.

TES. Good heavens, no!—that's as
ar as daylight.

HEDDA [*goes up the room*]. Well, I
ll have one thing at least to kill
ne with in the meanwhile.

TES. [*beaming*]. Oh, thank heaven
that! What is it, Hedda? Eh?

HEDDA [*in the middle doorway, looks at him with covert scorn*]. My pistols, George.

TES. [*in alarm*]. Your pistols!

HEDDA [*with cold eyes*]. General Gabler's pistols. [*She goes out through the inner room, to the left.*]

TES. [*rushes up to the middle doorway and calls after her:*] No, for heaven's sake, Hedda darling—don't touch those dangerous things! For my sake, Hedda! Eh?

ACT II

SCENE—*The room at the* TESMANS' *as in the first Act, except that the piano has been removed, and an elegant little writing-table with book-shelves put in its place. A smaller table stands near the sofa on the left. Most of the bouquets have been taken away.* MRS. ELVSTED'S *bouquet is upon the large table in front.—It is afternoon.*

HEDDA, *dressed to receive callers, is alone in the room. She stands by the open glass door, loading a revolver. The fellow to it lies in an open pistol-case on the writing-table.*

HEDDA [*looks down the garden, and calls:*] So you are here again, Judge!

BRACK [*is heard calling from a distance*]. As you see, Mrs. Tesman!

HEDDA [*raises the pistol and points*]. Now I'll shoot you, Judge Brack!

BRACK [*calling unseen*]. No, no, no! Don't stand aiming at me!

HEDDA. This is what comes of sneaking in by the back way. [*She fires.*]

BRACK [*nearer*]. Are you out of your senses——!

HEDDA. Dear me—did I happen to hit you?

BRACK [*still outside*]. I wish you would let these pranks alone!

HEDDA. Come in then, Judge.

BRACK, *dressed as though for a men's party, enters by the glass door. He carries a light overcoat over his arm.*

BRACK. What the deuce—haven't you tired of that sport, yet? What are you shooting at?

HEDDA. Oh, I am only firing in the air.

BRACK [*gently takes the pistol out of her hand*]. Allow me, madam! [*Looks at it.*] Ah—I know this pistol well! *Looks around.*] Where is the case? Ah, here it is. [*Lays the pistol in it, and shuts it.*] Now we won't play at that game any more to-day.

HEDDA. Then what in heaven's name would you have me do with myself?

BRACK. Have you had no visitors?

HEDDA [*closing the glass door*]. Not one. I suppose all our set are still out of town.

BRACK. And is Tesman not at home either?

HEDDA [*at the writing-table, putting the pistol-case in a drawer which she shuts*]. No. He rushed off to his aunt's directly after lunch; he didn't expect you so early.

BRACK. H'm—how stupid of me not to have thought of that!

HEDDA [*turning her head to look at him*]. Why stupid?

BRACK. Because if I had thought of it I should have come a little—earlier.

HEDDA [*crossing the room*]. Then you would have found no one to receive you; for I have been in my room changing my dress ever since lunch.

BRACK. And is there no sort of little chink that we could hold a parley through?

HEDDA. You have forgotten to arrange one.

BRACK. That was another piece o stupidity.

HEDDA. Well, we must just sett down here—and wait. Tesman is no likely to be back for some time yet.

BRACK. Never mind; I shall not b impatient.

HEDDA *seats herself in the corner o the sofa.* BRACK *lays his overcoat ove the back of the nearest chair, and si down, but keeps his hat in his han A short silence. They look at eac other.*

HEDDA. Well?

BRACK [*in the same tone*]. Well?

HEDDA. I spoke first.

BRACK [*bending a little forward* Come, let us have a cosy little cha Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA [*leaning further back in t sofa*]. Does it not seem like a who eternity since our last talk? Of cour I don't count those few words yeste day evening and this morning.

BRACK. You mean since our last co fidential talk? Our last tête-à-tête?

HEDDA. Well, yes—since you put so.

BRACK. Not a day has passed b I have wished that you were hor again.

HEDDA. And I have done nothi but wish the same thing.

BRACK. You? Really, Mrs. Hedd And I thought you had been enjoyi your tour so much!

HEDDA. Oh, yes, you may be su of that!

BRACK. But Tesman's letters spo of nothing but happiness.

HEDDA. Oh, Tesman! You see, thinks nothing so delightful as grub ing in libraries and making copies

parchments, or whatever you call
.

ACK [*with a spice of malice*]. Well,
is his vocation in life—or part
at any rate.

EDDA. Yes, of course; and no doubt
it's your vocation—— But *I!* Oh,
ear Mr. Brack, how mortally bored
've been.

RACK [*sympathetically*]. Do you
y say so? In downright earnest?

EDDA. Yes, you can surely under-
l it——! To go for six whole
ths without meeting a soul that
anything of our circle, or could
about the things we are interested

RACK. Yes, yes—I too should feel
a deprivation.

EDDA. And then, what I found
intolerable of all——

RACK. Well?

EDDA. ——was being everlastingly
e company of—one and the same
on——

RACK [*with a nod of assent*]. Morn-
noon, and night, yes—at all pos-
times and seasons.

EDDA. I said "everlastingly."

RACK. Just so. But I should have
ght, with our excellent Tesman,
could——

EDDA. Tesman is—a specialist, my
Judge.

RACK. Undeniably.

EDDA. And specialists are not at
musing to travel with. Not in the
run at any rate.

RACK. Not even—the specialist one
pens to love?

EDDA. Faugh—don't use that sick-
g word!

BRACK [*taken aback*]. What do you say, Mrs. Hedda?

HEDDA [*half laughing, half irritated*]. You should just try it! To hear of nothing but the history of civilisation, morning, noon, and night——

BRACK. Everlastingly.

HEDDA. Yes, yes, yes! And then all this about the domestic industry of the middle ages——! That's the most disgusting part of it!

BRACK [*looks searchingly at her*]. But tell me—in that case, how am I to understand your——? H'm——

HEDDA. My accepting George Tesman, you mean?

BRACK. Well, let us put it so.

HEDDA. Good heavens, do you see anything so wonderful in that?

BRACK. Yes and no—Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA. I had positively danced myself tired, my dear Judge. My day was done—— [*With a slight shudder.*] Oh no—I won't say that; nor think it either!

BRACK. You have assuredly no reason to.

HEDDA. Oh, reasons—— [*Watching him closely.*] And George Tesman—after all, you must admit that he is correctness itself.

BRACK. His correctness and respectability are beyond all question.

HEDDA. And I don't see anything absolutely ridiculous about him.—Do you?

BRACK. Ridiculous? N — no — I shouldn't exactly say so—

HEDDA. Well—and his powers of research, at all events, are untiring.—I see no reason why he should not one day come to the front, after all.

BRACK [*looks at her hesitatingly*]. I

thought that you, like every one else, expected him to attain the highest distinction.

HEDDA [*with an expression of fatigue*]. Yes, so I did.—And then, since he was bent, at all hazards, on being allowed to provide for me—I really don't know why I should not have accepted his offer?

BRACK. No—if you look at it in that light——

HEDDA. It was more than my other adorers were prepared to do for me, my dear Judge.

BRACK [*laughing*]. Well, I can't answer for all the rest; but as for myself, you know quite well that I have always entertained a—a certain respect for the marriage tie—for marriage as an institution, Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA [*jestingly*]. Oh, I assure you I have never cherished any hopes with respect to you.

BRACK. All I require is a pleasant and intimate interior, where I can make myself useful in every way, and am free to come and go as—as a trusted friend—

HEDDA. Of the master of the house, do you mean?

BRACK [*bowing*]. Frankly—of the mistress first of all; but of course of the master, too, in the second place. Such a triangular friendship—if I may call it so—is really a great convenience for all parties, let me tell you.

HEDDA. Yes, I have many a time longed for some one to make a third on our travels. Oh—those railway-carriage tête-à-têtes——!

BRACK. Fortunately your wedding journey is over now.

HEDDA [*shaking her head*]. Not by a long—long way. I have only arrived at a station on the line.

BRACK. Well, then the passengers jump out and move about a little, Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA. I never jump out.

BRACK. Really?

HEDDA. No—because there is always someone standing by to—

BRACK [*laughing*]. To look at your ankles, do you mean?

HEDDA. Precisely.

BRACK. Well but, dear me——

HEDDA [*with a gesture of repulsion*]. I won't have it. I would rather keep my seat where I happen to be—and continue the tête-à-tête.

BRACK. But suppose a third person were to jump in and join the couple.

HEDDA. Ah—that is quite another matter!

BRACK. A trusted, sympathetic friend——

HEDDA. ——with a fund of conversation on all sorts of lively topics——

BRACK. ——and not the least bit of a specialist!

HEDDA [*with an audible sigh*]. Yes, that would be a relief indeed.

BRACK [*hears the front door open and glances in that direction*]. The triangle is completed.

HEDDA [*half aloud*]. And on goes the train.

GEORGE TESMAN, *in a grey walking suit, with a soft felt hat, enters from the hall. He has a number of unbound books under his arm and in his pockets.*

TES. [*goes up to the table beside the corner settee*]. Ouf—what a load for a warm day—all these books. [*Lays them on the table.*] I'm positively perspiring, Hedda. Hallo—are you there

ady, my dear Judge? Eh? Berta n't tell me.

BRACK [*rising*]. I came in through garden.

HEDDA. What books have you got ce?

TES. [*stands looking them through*]. ne new books on my special sub- s—quite indispensable to me.

HEDDA. Your special subjects?

BRACK. Yes, books on his special jects, Mrs. Tesman. [BRACK *and* DDA *exchange a confidential smile.*]

HEDDA. Do you need still more books your special subjects?

TES. Yes, my dear Hedda, one can er have too many of them. Of rse one must keep up with all that written and published.

HEDDA. Yes, I suppose one must.

TES. [*searching among his books*]. d look here—I have got hold of ert Lövborg's new book too. [*Offer- it to her.*] Perhaps you would like glance through it, Hedda? Eh?

HEDDA. No, thank you. Or rather fterwards perhaps.

TES. I looked into it a little on the y home.

BRACK. What do you think of it— a specialist?

TES. I think it shows quite remark- le soundness of judgment. He never ote like that before. [*Putting the oks together.*] Now I shall take all ese into my study. I'm longing to t the leaves——! And then I must nge my clothes. [*To* BRACK.] I sup- se we needn't start just yet? Eh?

BRACK. Oh, dear no—there is not e slightest hurry.

TES. Well then, I will take my time. *s going with his books, but stops in the doorway and turns.*] By-the-bye, Hedda—Aunt Julia is not coming this evening.

HEDDA. Not coming? Is it that affair of the bonnet that keeps her away?

TES. Oh, not at all. How could you think such a thing of Aunt Julia? Just fancy——! The fact is, Aunt Rina is very ill.

HEDDA. She always is.

TES. Yes, but to-day she is much worse than usual, poor dear.

HEDDA. Oh, then it's only natural that her sister should remain with her. I must bear my disappointment.

TES. And you can't imagine, dear, how delighted Aunt Julia seemed to be—because you had come home looking so flourishing!

HEDDA [*half aloud, rising*]. Oh, those everlasting aunts!

TES. What?

HEDDA [*going to the glass door*]. Nothing.

TES. Oh, all right. [*He goes through the inner room, out to the right.*]

BRACK. What bonnet were you talking about?

HEDDA. Oh, it was a little episode with Miss Tesman this morning. She had lain down her bonnet on the chair there—[*looks at him and smiles.*]—And I pretended to think it was the servant's.

BRACK [*shaking his head*]. Now my dear Mrs. Hedda, how could you do such a thing? To that excellent old lady, too!

HEDDA [*nervously crossing the room*]. Well, you see—these impulses come over me all of a sudden; and I cannot resist them. [*Throws herself down in the easy-chair by the stove.*] Oh, I don't know how to explain it.

BRACK [*behind the easy-chair*]. You are not really happy—that is the bottom of it.

HEDDA [*looking straight before her*]. I know of no reason why I should be—happy. Perhaps you can give me one?

BRACK. Well—amongst other things, because you have got exactly the home you had set your heart on.

HEDDA [*looks up at him and laughs*]. Do you too believe in that legend?

BRACK. Is there nothing in it, then?

HEDDA. Oh, yes, there is something in it.

BRACK. Well?

HEDDA. There is this in it, that I made use of Tesman to see me home from evening parties last summer—

BRACK. I, unfortunately, had to go quite a different way.

HEDDA. That's true. I know you were going a different way last summer.

BRACK [*laughing*]. Oh! fie, Mrs. Hedda! Well, then—you and Tesman——?

HEDDA. Well, we happened to pass here one evening; Tesman, poor fellow was writhing in the agony of having to find conversation; so I took pity on the learned man——

BRACK [*smiles doubtfully*]. You took pity? H'm——

HEDDA. Yes, I really did. And so—to help him out of his torment—I happened to say, in pure thoughtlessness, that I should like to live in this villa.

BRACK. No more than that?

HEDDA. Not that evening.

BRACK. But afterwards

HEDDA. Yes, my thoughtlessness had consequences, my dear Judge.

BRACK. Unfortunately that too often happens, Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA. Thanks! So you see it was this enthusiasm for Secretary Falk's villa that first constituted a bond of sympathy between George Tesman and me. From that came our engagement and our marriage, and our wedding journey, and all the rest of it. Well, well, my dear Judge—as you make your bed so you must lie, I could almost say.

BRACK. This is exquisite! And you really cared not a rap about it all the time.

HEDDA. No, heaven knows I didn't.

BRACK. But now? Now that we have made is so homelike for you?

HEDDA. Uh—the rooms all seem to smell of lavendar and dried love-leaves. —But perhaps it's Aunt Julia that has brought that scent with her.

BRACK [*laughing*]. No, I think it must be a legacy from the late Mrs. Secretary Falk.

HEDDA. Yes, there is an odour of mortality about it. It reminds me of a bouquet — the day after the ball. [*Clasps her hands behind her head, leans back in her chair and looks at him.*] Oh, my dear Judge—you cannot imagine how horribly I shall bore myself here.

BRACK. Why should not you, too, find some sort of vocation in life, Mrs. Hedda?

HEDDA. A vocation—that should attract me?

BRACK. If possible, of course.

HEDDA. Heaven knows what sort of a vocation that could be. I often wonder whether—— [*Breaking off.*] But that would never do either.

BRACK. Who can tell? Let me hear what it is.

Hedda. Whether I might not get man to go into politics, I mean.

Brack [*laughing*]. Tesman? No, ly now, political life is not the ig for him—not at all in his line.

Hedda. No, I daresay not.—But if ould get him into it all the same?

Brack. Why—what satisfaction ld you find in that? If he is not ed for that sort of thing, why should want to drive him into it?

Hedda. Because I am bored, I tell ! [*After a pause.*] So you think quite out of the question that Tes- n should ever get into the ministry?

Brack. H'm—you see, my dear Mrs. dda—to get into the ministry, he uld have to be a tolerably rich man.

Hedda [*rising impatiently*]. Yes, re we have it! It is this genteel verty I have managed to drop into —! [*Crosses the room.*] That is at makes life so pitiable! So utterly icrous!—For that's what it is.

Brack. Now I should say the fault elsewhere.

Hedda. Where, then?

Brack. You have never gone through really stimulating experience.

Hedda. Anything serious, you mean?

Brack. Yes, you may call it so. now you may perhaps have one in e.

Hedda [*tossing her head*]. Oh, 're thinking of the annoyances ut this wretched professorship! But t must be Tesman's own affair. I ure you I shall not waste a thought n it.

Brack. No, no, I daresay not. But pose now that what people call— legant language—a solemn respon- lity were to come upon you? [*Smiling.*] A new responsibility, Mrs. Hedda?

Hedda [*angrily*]. Be quiet! Nothing of that sort will ever happen!

Brack [*warily*]. We will speak of this again a year hence—at the very outside.

Hedda [*curtly*]. I have no turn for anything of the sort, Judge Brack. No responsibilities for me!

Brack. Are you so unlike the generality of women as to have no turn for duties which——?

Hedda [*beside the glass door*]. Oh, be quiet, I tell you!—I often think there is only one thing in the world I have any turn for.

Brack [*drawing near to her*]. And what is that, if I may ask?

Hedda [*stands looking out*]. Boring myself to death. Now you know it. [*Turns, looks towards the inner room, and laughs*]. Yes, as I thought! Here comes the Professor.

Brack [*softly, in a tone of warning*]. Come, come, come, Mrs. Hedda!

George Tesman, *dressed for the party, with his gloves and hat in his hand, enters from the right through the inner room.*

Tes. Hedda, has no message come from Eilert Lövborg? Eh?

Hedda. No.

Tes. Then you'll see he'll be here presently.

Brack. Do you really think he'll come?

Tes. Yes, I am almost sure of it. For what you were telling us this morning must have been a mere floating rumour.

Brack. You think so?

Tes. At any rate, Aunt Julia said

she did not believe for a moment that he would ever stand in my way again. Fancy that!

BRACK. Well then, that's all right.

TES. [*placing his hat and gloves on a chair on the right*]. Yes, but you must really let me wait for him as long as possible.

BRACK. We have plenty of time yet. None of my guests will arrive before seven or half-past.

TES. Then meanwhile we can keep Hedda company, and see what happens. Eh?

HEDDA [*placing* BRACK'S *hat and overcoat upon the corner settee*]. And at the worst Mr. Lövborg can remain here with me.

BRACK [*offering to take his things*]. Oh, allow me, Mrs. Tesman!—What do you mean by "At the worst"?

HEDDA. If he won't go with you and Tesman.

TES. [*looks dubiously at her*]. But, Hedda dear—do you think it would quite do for him to remain with you? Eh? Remember, Aunt Julia can't come.

HEDDA. No, but Mrs. Elvsted is coming. We three can have a cup of tea together.

TES. Oh, yes, that will be all right.

BRACK [*smiling*]. And that would perhaps be the safest plan for him.

HEDDA. Why so?

BRACK. Well, you know, Mrs. Tesman, how you used to gird at my little bachelor parties. You declared they were adapted only for men of the strictest principles.

HEDDA. But no doubt Mr. Lövborg's principles are strict enough now. A converted sinner—— [BERTA *appears at the hall door.*]

BERTA. There's a gentleman asking if you are at home, ma'am——

HEDDA. Well, show him in.

TES. [*softly*]. I'm sure it is he! Fancy that!

EILERT LÖVBORG *enters from the hall. He is slim and lean; of the same age as* TESMAN, *but looks older and somewhat worn-out. His hair and beard are of a blackish brown, his face long and pale, but with patches of colour on the cheek-bones. He is dressed in a well-cut black visiting suit, quite new. He has dark gloves and a silk hat. He stops near the door, and makes a rapid bow, seeming somewhat embarrassed.*

TES. [*goes up to him and shakes him warmly by the hand*]. Well, my dear Eilert—so at last we meet again!

LÖV. [*speaks in a subdued voice.*] Thanks for your letter, Tesman. [*Approaching* HEDDA.] Will you too shake hands with me, Mrs. Tesman?

HEDDA [*taking his hand*]. I am glad to see you, Mr. Lövborg. [*With a motion of her hand.*] I don't know whether you two gentlemen——?

LÖV. [*bowing slightly*]. Judge Brack, I think.

BRACK [*doing likewise*]. Oh, yes,—in the old days——

TES. [*to* LÖVBORG, *with his hands on his shoulders*]. And now you must make yourself entirely at home, Eilert! Musn't he, Hedda?—For I hear you are going to settle in town again? Eh?

LÖV. Yes, I am.

TES. Quit right, quite right. Let me tell you, I have got hold of your new book; but I haven't had time to read it yet.

LÖV. You may spare yourself the trouble.

ES. Why so?
öv. Because there is very little in

ES. Just fancy—how can you say

RACK. But it has been very much ised, I hear.
öv. That was what I wanted; so I nothing into the book but what y one would agree with.
ES. Well but, my dear Eilert——!
RACK. Very wise of you.
öv. For now I mean to win myself osition again — to make a fresh t.
ES. [*a little embarrassed*]. Ah, that hat you wish to do? Eh?
öv. [*smiling, lays down his hat, and ws a packet, wrapped in paper m his coat pocket*]. But when this appears, George Tesman, you will e to read it. For this is the real k—the book I have put my true into.
ES. Indeed? And what is it?
öv. It is the continuation.
ES. The continuation? Of what?
öv. Of the book.
ES. Of the new book.
öv. Of course.
ES. Why, my dear Eilert—does it come down to our own days?
öv. Yes, it does; and this one deals h the future.
ES. With the future! But, good vens, we know nothing of the fu e!
öv. No; but there is a thing or two e said about it all the same. [*Opens packet.*] Look here——
ES. Why, that's not your hand ting.
öv. I dictated it. [*Turning over pages.*] It falls into two sections. The first deals with the civilising forces of the future. And here is the second —[*running through the pages towards the end*]—forecasting the probable line of development.

TES. How odd now! I should never have thought of writing anything of that sort.

HEDDA [*at the glass door, drumming on the pane*]. H'm—I daresay not.

LÖV. [*replacing the manuscript in its paper and laying the packet on the table*]. I brought it, thinking I might read you a little of it this evening.

TES. That was very good of you, Eilert. But this evening——? [*Looking at* BRACK.] I don't quite see how we can manage it——

LÖV. Well then, some other time. There is no hurry.

BRACK. I must tell you, Mr. Lövborg—there is a little gathering at my house this evening—mainly in honour of Tesman, you know——

LÖV. [*looking for his hat*]. Oh—then I won't detain you——

BRACK. No, but listen—will you not do me the favour of joining us?

LÖV. [*curtly and decidedly*]. No, I can't—thank you very much.

BRACK. Oh, nonsense — do! We shall be quite a select little circle. And I assure you we shall have a "lively time," as Mrs. Hed—as Mrs. Tesman says.

LÖV. I have no doubt of it. But nevertheless——

BRACK. And then you might bring your manuscript with you, and read it to Tesman at my house. I could give you a room to yourselves.

TES. Yes, think of that, Eilert,—why shouldn't you? Eh?

HEDDA [*interposing*]. But, Tesman, if Mr. Lövborg would really rather not! I am sure Mr. Lövborg is much more inclined to remain here and have supper with me.

LÖV. [*looking at her*]. With you, Mrs. Tesman?

HEDDA. And with Mrs. Elvsted.

LÖV. Ah—— [*Lightly.*] I saw her for a moment this morning.

HEDDA. Did you? Well, she is coming this evening. So you see you are almost bound to remain, Mr. Lövborg, or she will have no one to see her home.

LÖV. That's true. Many thanks, Mrs. Tesman—in that case I will remain.

HEDDA. Then I have one or two orders to give the servant—— [*She goes to the hall door and rings.* BERTA *enters.* HEDDA *talks to her in a whisper, and points toward the inner room.* BERTA *nods and goes out again.*]

TES. [*at the same time, to* LÖVBORG]. Tell me, Eilert—is it this new subject—the future—that you are going to lecture about?

LÖV. Yes.

TES. They told me at the book seller's, that you are going to deliver a course of lectures this autumn.

LÖV. That is my intention. I hope you won't take it ill, Tesman.

TES. Oh no, not in the least! But ——?

LÖV. I can quite understand that it must be disagreeable to you.

TES. [*cast down*]. Oh, I can't expect you, out of consideration for me, to——

LÖV. But I shall wait till you have received your appointment.

TES. Will you wait? Yes, but—are you not going to compete with me? Eh?

LÖV. No; it is only the moral victory I care for.

TES. Why, bless me—then Aunt Julia was right, after all! Oh yes—I knew it! Hedda! Just fancy—Eilert Lövborg is not going to stand in our way!

HEDDA [*curtly*]. Our way? Pray leave me out of the question. [*She goes up towards the inner room, where* BERTA *is placing a tray with decanters and glasses on the table.* HEDDA *nods approval, and comes forward again.* BERTA *goes out.*]

TES. [*at the same time*]. And you, Judge Brack—what do you say to this? Eh?

BRACK. Well, I say that a moral victory—h'm—may be all very fine——

TES. Yes, certainly. But all the same——

HEDDA [*looking at* TESMAN *with a cold smile*]. You stand there looking as if you were thunderstruck——

TES. Yes—so I am—I almost think ——

BRACK. Don't you see, Mrs. Tesman, a thunderstorm has just passed over?

HEDDA [*pointing towards the inner room*]. Will you not take a glass of cold punch, gentlemen?

BRACK [*looking at his watch*]. A stirrup-cup? Yes, it wouldn't come amiss.

TES. A capital idea, Hedda! Just the thing! Now that the weight has been taken off my mind——

HEDDA. Will you not join them, Mr. Lövborg?

LÖV. [*with a gesture of refusal*]. No, thank you. Nothing for me.

RACK. Why, bless me—cold punch urely not poison.

öv. Perhaps not for every one.

EDDA. I will keep Mr. Lövborg pany in the meantime.

ES. Yes, yes, Hedda dear, do. [*He* BRACK *go into the inner room, themselves, drink punch, smoke rettes, and carry on a lively con- sation during what follows.* EILERT BORG *remains beside the stove.* DDA *goes to the writing-table.*]

EDDA [*raising her voice a little*]. you care to look at some photo- phs, Mr. Lövborg? You know Tes- n and I made a tour in the Tyrol our way home? [*She takes up an um, and places it on the table be- the sofa, in the further corner of ich she seats herself.* EILERT LÖV- G *approaches, stops, and looks at . Then he takes a chair and seats self at her left, with his back ards the inner room.*]

EDDA [*opening the album*]. Do see this range of mountains, Mr. borg? It's the Ortler group. Tes- n has written the name underneath. e it is: "The Ortler group near an."

öv. [*who has never taken his eyes her, says softly and slowly:*] Hedda abler!

EDDA [*glancing hastily at him*]. ! Hush!

öv. [*repeats softly*]. Hedda Gab-

EDDA [*looking at the album*]. That my name in the old days—when two knew each other.

öv. And I must teach myself never ay Hedda Gabler again—never, as as I live.

HEDDA [*still turning over the pages*]. Yes, you must. And I think you ought to practice in time. The sooner the better, I should say.

LÖV. [*in a tone of indignation*]. Hedda Gabler married? And married to—George Tesman!

HEDDA. Yes—so the world goes.

LÖV. Oh, Hedda, Hedda—how could you throw yourself away!

HEDDA [*looks sharply at him*]. What? I can't allow this!

LÖV. What do you mean? [TESMAN *comes into the room and goes toward the sofa.*]

HEDDA [*hears him coming and says in an indifferent tone*]. And this is a view from the Val d'Ampezzo, Mr. Lövborg. Just look at these peaks! [*Looks affectionately up at* TESMAN.] What's the name of these curious peaks, dear?

TES. Let me see. Oh, those are the Dolomites.

HEDDA. Yes, that's it!—Those are the Dolomites, Mr. Lövborg.

TES. Hedda dear,—I only wanted to ask whether I shouldn't bring you a little punch after all? For yourself at any rate—eh?

HEDDA. Yes, do please; and perhaps a few biscuits.

TES. No cigarettes?

HEDDA. No.

TES. Very well. [*He goes into the inner room and out to the right.* BRACK *sits in the inner room, and keeps an eye from time to time on* HEDDA *and* LÖVBORG.]

LÖV. [*softly, as before*]. Answer me, Hedda—how could you go and do this?

HEDDA [*apparently absorbed in the album*]. If you continue to say *du* to me I won't talk to you.

Löv. May I not say *du* when we are alone?

Hedda. No. You may think it; but you mustn't say it.

Löv. Ah, I understand. It is an offence against George Tesman, whom you—love.

Hedda [*glances at him and smiles*]. Love? What an idea?

Löv. You don't love him then!

Hedda. But I won't hear of any sort of unfaithfulness! Remember that.

Löv. Hedda—answer me one thing —

Hedda. Hush! [Tesman *enters with a small tray from the inner room*].

Tes. Here you are! Isn't this tempting? [*He puts the tray on the table.*]

Hedda. Why do you bring it yourself?

Tes. [*filling the glasses*]. Because I think it's such fun to wait upon you, Hedda.

Hedda. But you have poured out two glasses. Mr. Lövborg said he wouldn't have any—

Tes. No, but Mrs. Elvsted will soon be here, won't she?

Hedda. Yes, by-the-bye—Mrs. Elvsted—

Tes. Had you forgotten her? Eh?

Hedda. We were so absorbed in these photographs. [*Shows him a picture.*] Do you remember this little village?

Tes. Oh, it's that one just below the Brenner Pass. It was there we passed the night—

Hedda. —and met that lively party of tourists.

Tes. Yes, that was the place. Fancy —if we could only have had you with us, Eilert! Eh? [*He returns to the inner room and sits beside* Brack.]

Löv. Answer me this one thing, Hedda—

Hedda. Well?

Löv. Was there no love in your friendship for me either? Not a spark —not a tinge of love in it?

Hedda. I wonder if there was? To me it seems as though we were two good comrades—two thoroughly intimate friends. [*Smilingly.*] You especially were frankness itself.

Löv. It was you that made me so.

Hedda. As I look back upon it all, I think there was really something beautiful, something fascinating — something daring—in—in that secret intimacy—that comradeship which no living creature so much as dreamed of.

Löv. Yes, yes, Hedda! Was there not?—When I used to come to your father's in the afternoon — and the General sat over at the window reading his papers—with his back towards us—

Hedda. And we two on the corner sofa—

Löv. Always with the same illustrated paper before us—

Hedda. For want of an album, yes.

Löv. Yes, Hedda, and when I made my confessions to you—told you about myself, things that at that time no one else knew! There I would sit and tell you of my escapades—my days and nights of devilment. Oh, Hedda—what was the power in you that forced me to confess these things?

Hedda. Do you think it was any power in me?

Löv. How else can I explain it? And all those—those roundabout ques-

s you used to put to me—

EDDA. Which you understood so ticularly well—

öv. How could you sit and ques- me like that? Question me quite kly—

EDDA. In roundabout terms, please erve.

öv. Yes, but frankly nevertheless. ss-question me about—all that sort hing?

EDDA. And how could you answer, Lövborg.

öv. Yes, that is just what I can't erstand—in looking back upon it. tell me now, Hedda—was there love at the bottom of our friend- ?? On your side, did you not feel though you might purge my stains ıy if I made you my confessor? s it not so?

EDDA. No, not quite.

öv. What was your motive, then?

EDDA. Do you think it quite incom- hensible that a young girl—when it be done—without any one know- —

öv. Well?

EDDA. —should be glad to have a p, now and then, into a world ch—

öv. Which—?

EDDA. —which she is forbidden to w anything about?

öv. So that was it?

EDDA. Partly. Partly—I almost nk.

öv. Comradeship in the thirst for . But why should not that, at any e, have continued?

EDDA. The fault was yours.

öv. It was you that broke with me.

EDDA. Yes, when our friendship threatened to develop into something more serious. Shame upon you, Eilert Lövborg! How could you think of wronging your—your frank comrade?

Löv. [*clenching his hands*]. Oh, why did you not carry out your threat? Why did you not shoot me down?

HEDDA. Because I have such a dread of scandal.

Löv. Yes, Hedda, you are a coward at heart.

HEDDA. A terrible coward. [*Changing her tone.*] But it was a lucky thing for you. And now you have found ample consolation at the Elvsteds'.

Löv. I know what Thea has confided to you.

HEDDA. And perhaps you have confided to her something about us?

Löv. Not a word. She is too stupid to understand anything of that sort.

HEDDA. Stupid?

Löv. She is stupid about matters of that sort.

HEDDA. And I am cowardly. [*Bends over towards him, without looking him in the face, and says more softly*:] But now I will confide something to you.

Löv. [*eagerly*]. Well?

HEDDA. The fact that I dared not shoot you down—

Löv. Yes!

HEDDA. —that was not my most arrant cowardice—that evening.

Löv. [*looks at her a moment, understands and whispers passionately*]. Oh, Hedda! Hedda Gabler! Now I begin to see a hidden reason beneath our comradeship! You and I——! After all, then, it was your craving for life—

HEDDA [*softly, with a sharp glance.*]

Take care! Believe nothing of the sort!

[*Twilight has begun to fall. The hall door is opened from without by* BERTA.]

HEDDA. [*Closes the album with a bang and calls smilingly*:] Ah, at last! My darling Thea,—come along!

MRS. ELVSTED *enters from the hall. She is in evening dress. The door is closed behind her.*

HEDDA [*on the sofa, stretches out her arms towards her*]. My sweet Thea —you can't think how I have been longing for you!

[MRS. ELVSTED, *in passing, exchanges slight salutations with the gentlemen in the inner room, then goes up to the table and gives* HEDDA *her hands.* EILERT LÖVBORG *has risen. He and* MRS. ELVSTED *greet each other with a silent nod.*]

MRS. ELVS. Ought I go in and talk to your husband for a moment?

HEDDA. Oh, not at all. Leave those two alone. They will soon be going.

MRS. ELVS. Are they going out?

HEDDA. Yes, to a supper-party.

MRS. ELVS. [*quickly, to* LÖVBORG]. Not you?

LÖV. No.

HEDDA. Mr. Lövborg remains with us.

MRS. ELVS. [*Takes a chair and is about to seat herself at his side.*] Oh, how nice it is here!

HEDDA. No, thank you, my little Thea! Not there! You'll be good enough to come over here to me. I will sit between you.

MRS. ELVS. Yes, just as you please. [*She goes round the table and seats herself on the sofa on* HEDDA'S *right.* LÖVBORG *reseats himself on his chair.*]

LÖV. [*after a short pause, to* HEDDA]. Is not she lovely to look at?

HEDDA [*lightly stroking her hair*]. Only to look at?

LÖV. Yes. For we two—she and I —we are two real comrades. We have absolute faith in each other; so we can sit and talk with perfect frankness——

HEDDA. Not round about, Mr. Lövborg?

LÖV. Well——

MRS. ELVS. [*softly clinging close to* HEDDA]. Oh, how happy I am, Hedda; For, only think, he says I have inspired him too.

HEDDA. [*Looks at her with a smile.*] Ah! Does he say that, dear?

LÖV. And then she is so brave, Mrs. Tesman!

MRS. ELVS. Good heavens—am I brave?

LÖV. Exceedingly—where your comrade is concerned.

HEDDA. Ah yes—courage! If one only had that!

LÖV. What then? What do you mean?

HEDDA. Then life would perhaps be liveable after all. [*With a sudden change of tone.*] But now, my dearest Thea, you really must have a glass of cold punch.

MRS. ELVS. No, thanks—I never take anything of that kind.

HEDDA. Well then, you, Mr. Lövborg.

LÖV. Nor I, thank you.

MRS. ELVS. No, he doesn't either.

HEDDA. [*Looks fixedly at him*]. But if I say you shall?

öv. It would be no use.

EDDA [*laughing*]. Then I, poor ture, have no sort of power over ?

öv. Not in that respect.

EDDA. But seriously, I think you it to—for your own sake.

RS. ELVS. Why, Hedda——!

öv. How so?

EDDA. Or rather on account of r people.

öv. Indeed?

EDDA. Otherwise people might be to suspect that—in your heart of ts—you did not feel quite secure ite confident of yourself.

RS. ELVS. [*softly*]. Oh! please, da—.

öv. People may suspect what they —for the present.

RS. ELVS. [*joyfully*]. Yes, let ı!

EDDA. I saw it plainly in Judge ck's face a moment ago.

öv. What did you see?

EDDA. His contemptuous smile, n you dared not go with them into inner room.

öv. Dared not? Of course I pre- ed to stop here and talk to you.

RS. ELVS. What could be more nat- , Hedda?

EDDA. But the Judge could not s that. And I saw, too, the way miled and glanced at Tesman when dared not accept his invitation to wretched little supper-party of

öv. Dared not? Do you say I d not?

EDDA. I don't say so. But that how Judge Brack understood it.

öv. Well, let him.

HEDDA. Then you are not going with them.

LÖV. I will stay here with you and Thea.

MRS. ELVS. Yes, Hedda—how can you doubt that?

HEDDA [*smiles and nods approvingly to* LÖVBORG]. Firm as a rock! Faithful to your principles, now and forever! Ah, that is how a man should be! [*Turns to* MRS. ELVSTED *and caresses her*]. Well now, what did I tell you, when you came to us this morning in such a state of distraction—

LÖV. [*surprised*]. Distraction!

MRS. ELVS. [*terrified*]. Hedda—oh Hedda——!

HEDDA. You can see for yourself; you haven't the slightest reason to be in such mortal terror—— [*Interrupting herself.*] There! Now we can all three enjoy ourselves!

LÖV. [*who has given a start*]. Ah—what is all this, Mrs. Tesman?

MRS. ELVS. Oh my God, Hedda! What are you saying? What are you doing?

HEDDA. Don't get excited! That horrid Judge Brack is sitting watching you.

LÖV. So she was in mortal terror! On my account!

MRS. ELVS. [*softly and piteously*]. Oh, Hedda—now you have ruined everything!

LÖV. [*Looks fixedly at her for a moment. His face is distorted.*] So that was my comrade's frank confidence in me?

MRS. ELVS. [*imploringly*]. Oh, my dearest friend—only let me tell you—

LÖV. [*Takes one of the glasses of punch, raises it to his lips, and says in*

a low, husky voice.] Your health, Thea!

[*He empties the glass, puts it down, and takes the second.*]

MRS. ELVS. [*softly*]. Oh, Hedda, Hedda—how could you do this?

HEDDA. *I* do it? I? Are you crazy?

LÖV. Here's to your health too, Mrs. Tesman. Thanks for the truth. Hurrah for the truth!

[*He empties the glass and is about to re-fill it.*]

HEDDA. [*Lays her hand on his arm.*] Come, come—no more for the present. Remember you are going out to supper.

MRS. ELVS. No, no, no!

HEDDA. Hush! They are sitting watching you.

LÖV. [*putting down the glass.*] Now, Thea—tell me the truth—

MRS. ELVS. Yes.

LÖV. Did your husband know that you had come after me?

MRS. ELVS. [*wringing her hands*]. Oh, Hedda—do you hear what he is asking?

LÖV. Was it arranged between you and him that you were to come to town and look after me? Perhaps it was the Sheriff himself that urged you to come? Aha, my dear—no doubt he wanted my help in his office! Or was it at the card-table that he missed me?

MRS. ELVS. [*softly, in agony*]. Oh, Lövborg, Lövborg—!

LÖV. [*Seizes a glass and is on the point of filling it.*] Here's a glass for the old Sheriff too!

HEDDA [*preventing him*]. No more just now. Remember you have to read your manuscript to Tesman.

LÖV. [*calmly, putting down the glass*]. It was stupid of me all this, Thea—to take it in this way, I mean. Don't be angry with me, my dear, dear comrade. You shall see—both you and the others—that if I was fallen once—now I have risen again! Thanks to you, Thea.

MRS. ELVS. [*radiant with joy.*] Oh, heaven be praised—!

[BRACK *has in the meantime looked at his watch. He and* TESMAN *rise and come into the drawing-room.*]

BRACK. [*Takes his hat and overcoat.*] Well, Mrs. Tesman, our time has come.

HEDDA. I suppose it has.

LÖV. [*rising*]. Mine too, Judge Brack.

MRS. ELVS. [*softly and imploringly*]. Oh, Lövborg, don't do it!

HEDDA [*pinching her arm*]. They can hear you!

MRS. ELVS. [*with a suppressed shriek*]. Ow!

LÖV. [*to* BRACK]. You were good enough to invite me.

BRACK. Well, are you coming after all?

LÖV. Yes, many thanks.

BRACK. I'm delighted—

LÖV. [*to* TESMAN, *putting the parcel of MS. in his pocket*]. I should like to show you one or two things before I send it to the printers.

TES. Fancy—that will be delightful. But, Hedda dear, how is Mrs. Elvsted to get home? Eh?

HEDDA. Oh, that can be managed somehow.

LÖV. [*looking towards the ladies*]. Mrs. Elvsted? Of course, I'll come again and fetch her. [*Approaching.*] At ten or thereabouts, Mrs. Tesman? Will that do?

EDDA. Certainly. That will do cap-
y.
ES. Well, then, that's all right. But
must not expect me so early,
da.
EDDA. Oh, you may stop as long—
ng as ever you please.
RS. ELVS. [*trying to conceal her
ety*]. Well then, Mr. Lövborg—I
remain here until you come.
öv. [*with his hat in his hand*].
do, Mrs. Elvsted.
RACK. And now off goes the ex-
ion train, gentlemen! I hope we
have a lively time, as a certain
lady puts it.
EDDA. Ah, if only the fair lady
d be present unseen—!
RACK. Why unseen?
EDDA. In order to hear a little of
liveliness at first hand, Judge
k.
RACK [*laughingly*]. I should not
se the fair lady to try it.
ES. [*also laughing*]. Come, you're
e one Hedda! Fancy that!
RACK. Well, good-bye, good-bye,
s.
öv. [*bowing*]. About ten o'clock,

BRACK, LÖVBORG *and* TESMAN *go
ut by the hall door. At the same
ime* BERTA *enters from the inner
oom with a lighted lamp, which
he places on the dining-room table;
he goes out by the way she came.*]
RS. ELVS. [*who has risen and is
dering restlessly about the room*].
da—Hedda—what will come of all
?
EDDA. At ten o'clock—he will be
. I can see him already—with
-leaves in his hair—flushed and
less—

MRS. ELVS. Oh, I hope he may.

HEDDA. And then you see—then he will have regained control over himself. Then he will be a free man for all his days.

MRS. ELVS. Oh God!—if he would only come as you see him now!

HEDDA. He will come as I see him—so, and not otherwise! [*Rises and approaches* THEA.] You may doubt him as long as you please; I believe in him. And now we will try—

MRS. ELVS. You have some hidden motive in this, Hedda!

HEDDA. Yes, I have. I want for once in my life to have power to mould a human destiny.

MRS. ELVS. Have you not the power?

HEDDA. I have not—and have never had it.

MRS. ELVS. Not your husband's?

HEDDA. Do you think that is worth the trouble? Oh, if you could only understand how poor I am. And fate has made you so rich! [*Clasps her passionately in her arms.*] I think I must burn your hair off, after all.

MRS. ELVS. Let me go! Let me go! I am afraid of you, Hedda!

BERTA [*in the middle doorway*]. Tea is laid in the dining room, ma'am.

HEDDA. Very well. We are coming.

MRS. ELVS. No, no, no! I would rather go home alone! At once!

HEDDA. Nonsense? First you shall have a cup of tea, you little stupid. And then—at ten o'clock—Eilert Lövborg will be here—with vine-leaves in his hair.

[*She drags* MRS. ELVSTED *almost by force towards the middle doorway.*]

ACT III

SCENE—*The room at the* TESMAN'S. *The curtains are drawn over the middle doorway, and also over the glass door. The lamp, half turned down, and with a shade over it, is burning on the table. In the stove, the door of which stands open, there has been a fire, which is now nearly burnt out.*

MRS. ELVSTED, *wrapped in a large shawl, and with her feet upon a foot-rest, sits close to the stove, sunk back in the arm-chair.* HEDDA, *fully dressed, lies sleeping upon the sofa, with a sofa-blanket over her.*

MRS. ELVS. [*after a pause, suddenly sits up in her chair, and listens eagerly. Then she sinks back again wearily, moaning to herself.*] Not yet!—Oh God—oh God—not yet!

BERTA *slips in by the hall door. She has a letter in her hand.*

MRS. ELVS. [*Turns and whispers eagerly.*] Well—has any one come?

BERTA [*softly*]. Yes, a girl has brought this letter.

MRS. ELVS. [*quickly, holding out her hand*]. A letter! Give it to me!

BERTA. No, it's for Dr. Tesman, ma'am.

MRS. ELVS. Oh, indeed.

BERTA. It was Miss Tesman's servant that brought it. I'll lay it here on the table.

MRS. ELVS. Yes, do.

BERTA [*laying down the letter*]. I think I had better put out the lamp. It's smoking.

MRS. ELVS. Yes, put it out. It must soon be daylight now.

BERTA [*putting out the lamp.*] It is daylight already, ma'am.

MRS. ELVS. Yes, broad day! And no one come back yet—!

BERTA. Lord bless you, ma'am—I guessed how it would be.

MRS. ELVS. You guessed.

BERTA. Yes, when I saw that a certain person had come back to town—and that he went off with them. For we've heard enough about that gentleman before now.

MRS. ELVS. Don't speak so loud. You will waken Mrs. Tesman.

BERTA [*looks towards the sofa and sighs*]. No, no—let her sleep, poor thing. Shan't I put some wood on the fire?

MRS. ELVS. Thanks, not for me.

BERTA. Oh, very well. [*She goes softly out by the hall door.*]

HEDDA [*is awakened by the shutting of the door, and looks up*]. What's that—?

MRS. ELVS. It was only the servant—

HEDDA. [*looking about her*]. Oh, we're here—! Yes, now I remember. [*Sits erect upon the sofa, stretches herself, and rubs her eyes.*] What o'clock is it, Thea?

MRS. ELV. [*Looks at her watch.*] It's past seven.

HEDDA. When did Tesman come home?

MRS. ELVS. He has not come.

HEDDA. Not come home yet?

MRS. ELVS. [*rising*]. No one has come.

HEDDA. Think of our watching and waiting here till four in the morning—

MRS. ELVS. [*wringing her hands*]. And how I watched and waited for him!

HEDDA. [*Yawns, and says with her hand before her mouth.*] Well, well—

might have spared ourselves the
ble.

RS. ELVS. Did you get a little
o?

EDDA. Oh yes; I believe I have
pretty well. Have you not?

RS. ELVS. Not for a moment. I
dn't, Hedda!—not to save my life.

EDDA. [*Rises and goes towards her.*]
re—there—there! There's nothing
e so alarmed about. I understand
e well what has happened.

RS. ELVS. Well, what do you think?
't you tell me?

EDDA. Why, of course it has been
ry late affair at Judge Brack's—

RS. ELVS. Yes, yes, that is clear
gh. But all the same—

EDDA. And then, you see, Tesman
't cared to come home and ring us
n the middle of the night [*Laugh-*
. Perhaps he wasn't inclined to
himself either—immediately after
llification.

RS. ELVS. But in that case—where
ne have gone?

EDDA. Of course he has gone to his
's and slept there. They have his
oom ready for him.

RS. ELVS. No, he can't be with
; for a letter has just come for
from Miss Tesman. There it lies.

EDDA. Indeed? [*Looks at the ad-*
.] Why yes, it's addressed in
Julia's own hand. Well then, he
remained at Judge Brack's. And
or Eilert Lövborg—he is sitting,
vine leaves in his hair, reading
nanuscript.

EDDA. Oh, Hedda, you are just
g things you don't believe a bit.

EDDA. You really are a little block-
Thea.

RS. ELVS. Oh yes, I suppose I am.

HEDDA. And how mortally tired you look.

MRS. ELVS. Yes, I am mortally tired.

HEDDA. Well then, you must do as I tell you. You must go into my room and lie down for a little while.

MRS. ELVS. Oh no, no—I shouldn't be able to sleep.

HEDDA. I am sure you would.

MRS. ELVS. Well, but your husband is certain to come soon now; and then I want to know at once—

HEDDA. I shall take care to let you know when he comes.

MRS. ELVS. Do you promise me, Hedda?

HEDDA. Yes, rely upon me. Just you go in and have a sleep in the meantime.

MRS. ELVS. Thanks; then I'll try to. [*She goes off through the inner room.*]

[HEDDA *goes up to the glass door and draws back the curtains. The broad daylight streams into the room. Then she takes a little hand-glass from the writing-table, looks at herself in it, and arranges her hair. Next she goes to the hall door and presses the bell-button.*]

BERTA *presently appears at the hall door.*

BERTA. Did you want anything, ma'am?

HEDDA. Yes; you must put some more wood in the stove. I am shivering.

BERTA. Bless me—I'll make up the fire at once. [*She rakes the embers together and lays a piece of wood upon them; then stops and listens.*] That was a ring at the front door, ma'am.

HEDDA. Then go to the door. I will look after the fire.

BERTA. It'll soon burn up. [*She goes out by the hall door.*]

[HEDDA *kneels on the foot-rest and lays some more pieces of wood in the stove.*]

After a short pause, GEORGE TESMAN *enters from the hall. He looks tired and rather serious. He steals on tiptoe towards the middle doorway and is about to slip through the curtains.*

HEDDA. [*At the stove, without looking up.*] Good morning.

TES. [*Turns.*] Hedda! [*Approaching her.*] Good heavens—are you up so early? Eh?

HEDDA. Yes, I am up very early this morning.

TES. And I never doubted you were still sound asleep! Fancy that, Hedda!

HEDDA. Don't speak so loud. Mrs. Elvsted is resting in my room.

TES. Has Mrs. Elvsted been here all night?

HEDDA. Yes, since no one came to fetch her.

TES. Ah, to be sure.

HEDDA. [*Closes the door of the stove and rises.*] Well, did you enjoy yourself at Judge Brack's?

TES. Have you been anxious about me? Eh?

HEDDA. No, I should never think of being anxious. But I asked if you had enjoyed yourself.

TES. Oh yes,—for once in a way. Especially the beginning of the evening; for then Eilert read me part of his book. We arrived more than an hour too early—fancy that! And Brack had all sorts of arrangements to make—so Eilert read to me.

HEDDA [*seating herself by the table on the right.*] Well? Tell me, then—

TES. [*sitting on a footstool near the stove.*] Oh! Hedda, you can't conceive what a book that is going to be! I believe it is one of the most remarkable things that have ever been written. Fancy that!

HEDDA. Yes, yes; I don't care about that——

TES. I must make a confession to you, Hedda. When he had finished reading—a horrid feeling came over me.

HEDDA. A horrid feeling?

TES. I felt jealous of Eilert for having had it in him to write such a book. Only think, Hedda!

HEDDA. Yes, yes, I am thinking!

TES. And then how pitiful to think that he—with all his gifts—should be irreclaimable after all.

HEDDA. I suppose you mean that he has more courage than the rest?

TES. No, not at all—I mean that he is incapable of taking his pleasures in moderation.

HEDDA. And what came of it all—in the end?

TES. Well, to tell the truth, I think it might best be described as an orgy, Hedda.

HEDDA. Had he vine-leaves in his hair?

TES. Vine-leaves? No, I saw nothing of the sort. But he made a long, rambling speech in honour of the woman who had inspired him in his work—that was the phrase he used.

HEDDA. Did he name her?

TES. No, he didn't; but I can't help thinking he meant Mrs. Elvsted. You may be sure he did.

HEDDA. Well—where did you part from him?

TES. On the way to town. We

up—the last of us at any rate—
gether; and Brack came with us
a breath of fresh air. An then,
ee, we agreed to take Eilert home;
ie had had far more than was
for him.

DDA. I daresay.

. But now comes the strange part
Hedda; or, I should rather say,
elancholy part of it. I declare I
lmost ashamed—on Eilert's ac-
—to tell you—

DDA. Oh, go on—

s. Well, as we were getting near
you see, I happend to drop a
behind the others. Only for a
te or two—fancy that!

DDA. Yes, yes, yes, but——?

s. And then, as I hurried after
—what do you think I found by
ayside? Eh?

DDA. Oh, how should I know!

s. You musn't speak of it to a
Hedda! Do you hear! Promise
or Eilert's sake. [*Draws a parcel,*
ped in paper, from his coat
et.] Fancy, dear—I found this.

DDA. Is not that the parcel he had
him yesterday?

s. Yes, it is the whole of his
ous, irreplacable manuscript! And
ad gone and lost it, and knew
ng about it. Only fancy, Hedda.
eplorably—

DDA. But why did you not give
back the parcel at once?

s. I didn't dare to—in the state
as then in—

DDA. Did you not tell any of the
s that you had found it?

s. Oh, far from it! You can
understand that, for Eilert's
I wouldn't do that.

DDA. So no one knows that Eilert
Lövborg's manuscript is in your pos-
session?

TES. No. And no one must know it.

HEDDA. Then what did you say to
him afterwards?

TES. I didn't talk to him again at
all; for when we got in among the
streets, he and two or three of the
others gave us the slip and disap-
peared. Fancy that!

HEDDA. Indeed! They must have
taken him home then.

TES. Yes, so it would appear. And
Brack, too, left us.

HEDDA. And what have you been do-
ing with yourself since?

TES. Well, I and some of the others
went home with one of the party, a
jolly fellow, and took our morning cof-
fee with him; or perhaps I should
rather call it our night coffee—eh? But
now, when I have rested a little, and
given Eilert, poor fellow, time to have
his sleep out, I must take this back
to him.

HEDDA. [*Holds out her hand for the*
packet.] No—don't give it to him!
Not in such a hurry, I mean. Let me
read it first.

TES. No, my dearest Hedda, I
mustn't, I really mustn't.

HEDDA. You must not?

TES. No—for you can imagine what
a state of despair he will be in when
he awakens and misses the manuscript.
He has no copy of it, you must know!
He told me so.

HEDDA [*looking searchingly at him.*]
Can such a thing not be reproduced?
Written over again?

TES. No, I don't think that would
be possible. For the inspiration, you
see—

HEDDA. Yes, yes—I suppose it de-

pends on that. [*Lightly.*] But, by-the-bye—here is a letter for you.

TES. Fancy——!

HEDDA [*handing it to him.*] It came early this morning.

TES. It's from Aunt Julia! What can it be? [*He lays the packet on the other footstool, opens the letter, runs his eye through it, and jumps up.*] Oh, Hedda—she says that poor Aunt Rina is dying!

HEDDA. Well, we were prepared for that.

TES. And that if I want to see her again, I must make haste. I'll run in to them at once.

HEDDA [*suppressing a smile.*] Will you run?

TES. Oh, dearest Hedda—if you could only make up your mind to come with me! Just think!

HEDDA. [*Rises and says wearily, repelling the idea.*] No, no, don't ask me. I will not look upon sickness and death. I loathe all sorts of ugliness.

TES. Well, well then—! [*Bustling around.*] My hat— My overcoat—? Oh, in the hall— I do hope I mayn't come too late, Hedda! Eh?

HEDDA. Oh, if you run—

BERTA. Judge Brack is at the door, and wishes to know if he may come in.

TES. At this time! No, I can't possibly see him.

HEDDA. But I can. [*To* BERTA.] Ask Judge Brack to come in. [BERTA *goes out.*]

HEDDA [*quickly whispering.*] The parcel, Tesman! [*She snatches it up from the stool.*]

TES. Yes, give it to me!

HEDDA. No, no, I will keep it till you come back.

[*She goes to the writing-table and places it in the book-case.* TESMAN *stands in a flurry of haste and cannot get his gloves on.*]

JUDGE BRACK *enters from the hall.*

HEDDA [*nodding to him*]. You are an early bird, I must say.

BRACK. Yes, don't you think so? [*To* TESMAN.] Are you on the move too?

TES. Yes, I must rush off to my aunts'. Fancy—the invalid one is lying at death's door, poor creature.

BRACK. Dear me, is she indeed? Then on no account let me detain you. At such a critical moment—

TES. Yes, I must really rush—— Good-bye! Good-bye! [*He hastens out by the hall door.*]

HEDDA [*approaching*]. You seem to have made a particularly lively night of it at your rooms, Judge Brack.

BRACK. I assure you I have not had my clothes off, Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA. Not you, either?

BRACK. No, as you may see. But what has Tesman been telling you of the night's adventures?

HEDDA. Oh, some tiresome story. Only that they went and had coffee somewhere or other.

BRACK. I have heard about that coffee-party already, Eilert Lövborg was not with them, I fancy?

HEDDA. No, they had taken him home before that.

BRACK. Tesman, too?

HEDDA. No, but some of the others he said.

BRACK [*smiling*]. George Tesman is really an ingenuous creature, Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA. Yes, heaven knows he is. Then is there something behind all this?

ACK. Yes, perhaps there may be.
DDA. Well then, sit down, my
Judge, and tell your story in com-

e seats herself to the left of the able. BRACK *sits near her, at the ong side of the table.*]

DDA. Now then?
ACK. I had special reasons for
ng track of my guests—or rather
me of my guests—last night.
DDA. Of Eilert Lövborg among
st, perhaps?
ACK. Frankly, yes.
DDA. Now you make me really
IS—
ACK. Do you know where he and
r two of the others finished the
Mrs. Hedda?
DDA. If it is not quite unmen-
le, tell me.
CK. Oh no, it's not at all un-
onable. Well, they put in an ap-
ice at a particularly animated

DDA. Of the lively kind?
CK. Of the very liveliest—
DDA. Tell me more of this, Judge
—
CK. Lövborg, as well as the
had been invited in advance.
v all about it. But he had de-
the invitation; for now, as you
he has become a new man.
DA. Up at the Elvsted's, yes.
e went after all, then?
CK. Well, you see, Mrs. Hedda
ppily the spirit moved him at
oms last evening—
DA. Yes, I hear he found inspi-

OK. Pretty violent inspiration.
fancy that altered his purpose;
men folk are unfortunately not always so firm in our principles as we ought to be.

HEDDA. Oh, I am sure you are an exception, Judge Brack. But as to Lövborg—?

BRACK. To make a long story short—he landed at last in Mademoiselle Diana's rooms.

HEDDA. Mademoiselle Diana's?

BRACK. It was Mademoiselle Diana that was giving the soirée, to a select circle of her admirers and her lady friends.

HEDDA. Is she a red-haired woman?

BRACK. Precisely.

HEDDA. A sort of a—singer?

BRACK. Oh! yes—in her leisure moments. And moreover a mighty huntress—of men—Mrs. Hedda. You have no doubt heard of her. Eilert Lövborg was one of her most enthusiastic protectors—in the days of his glory.

HEDDA. And how did all this end?

BRACK. Far from amicably, it appears. After a most tender meeting, they seem to have come to blows—

HEDDA. Lövborg and she?

BRACK. Yes. He accused her or her friends of having robbed him. He declared that his pocket-book had disappeared—and other things as well. In short he seems to have made a furious disturbance.

HEDDA. And what came of it all?

BRACK. It came to a general scrimmage, in which the ladies as well as the gentlemen took part. Fortunately the police at last appeared on the scene.

HEDDA. The police too?

BRACK. Yes. I fancy it will prove a costly frolic for Eilert Lövborg, crazy being that he is.

HEDDA. How so?

BRACK. He seems to have made a

violent resistance—to have hit one of the constables on the head and torn the coat off his back. So they had to march him off to the police-station with the rest.

HEDDA. How have you learnt all this?

BRACK. From the police themselves.

HEDDA [*gazing straight before her.*] So that is what happened. Then he had no vine-leaves in his hair?

BRACK. Vine-leaves, Mrs. Hedda?

HEDDA [*changing her tone*]. But tell me now, Judge—what is your real reason for tracking out Eilert Lövborg's movements so carefully?

BRACK. In the first place, it could not be entirely indifferent to me if it should appear in the police-court that he came straight from my house.

HEDDA. Will the matter come into court then?

BRACK. Of course. However, I should scarcely have troubled so much about that. But I thought that, as a friend of the family, it was my duty to supply you and Tesman with a full account of his nocturnal exploits.

HEDDA. Why so, Judge Brack?

BRACK. Why, because I have a shrewd suspicion that he intends to use you as a sort of blind.

HEDDA. Oh, how can you think such a thing!

BRACK. Good heavens, Mrs. Hedda —we have eyes in our head. Mark my words! This Mrs. Elvsted will be in no hurry to leave town again.

HEDDA. Well, even if there should be anything between them, I suppose there are plenty of other places where they could meet.

BRACK. Not a single home. Henceforth, as before, every respectable house will be closed against Eilert Lövborg.

HEDDA. And so ought mine to be you mean?

BRACK. Yes. I confess it would be more than painful to me if this personage were to be made free of your house. How superfluous, how intrusive, he would be, if he were to force his way into—

HEDDA. —into the triangle?

BRACK. Precisely. It would simply mean that I should find myself homeless.

HEDDA. [*Looks at him with a smile.*] So you want to be the one cock in the basket—that is your aim.

BRACK [*nods slowly and lowers his voice.*] Yes, that is my aim. And for that I will fight—with every weapon I can command.

HEDDA [*her smile vanishing*]. I see you are a dangerous person—when it comes to the point.

BRACK. Do you think so?

HEDDA. I am beginning to think so. And I am exceedingly glad to think—that you have no sort of hold over me.

BRACK [*laughing equivocally*]. Well, well, Mrs. Hedda—perhaps you are right there. If I had, who knows what I might be capable of?

HEDDA. Come, come now, Judge Brack. That sounds almost like a threat.

BRACK [*rising*]. Oh, not at all! The triangle, you know, ought, if possible, to be spontaneously constructed.

HEDDA. There I agree with you.

BRACK. Well, now I have said all I had to say; and I had better be getting back to town. Good-bye, Mrs. Hedda. [*He goes towards the glass door.*]

ODA [*rising*]. Are you going gh the garden?

ACK. Yes, it's a short cut for me.

ODA. And then it is a back way,

ACK. Quite so. I have no objec- o back ways. They may be pi- enough at times.

ODA. When there is ball practice on, you mean?

ACK [*in the doorway, laughing to* Oh, people don't shoot their poultry, I fancy.

ODA [*also laughing*]. Oh no, there is only one cock in the t—

ey exchange laughing nods of arewell. He goes. She closes the oor behind him.]

EDDA, *who has become quite se- ious, stands for a moment looking ut. Presently she goes and peeps hrough the curtain over the mid- le doorway. Then she goes to he writing-table, takes* LÖVBORG'S *acket out of the bookcase, and is n the point of looking through its ontents.* BERTA *is heard speak- ng loudly in the hall.* HEDDA *urns and listens. Then she astily locks up the packet in the rawer, and lays the key on the nkstand.*]

ERT LÖVBORG, *with his great coat n and his hat in his hand, tears pen the hall door. He looks omewhat confused and irritated.* . [*looking towards the hall*]. And you I must and will come in! !

e closes the door, turns and sees [EDDA, *at once regains his self- ontrol, and bows.*]

ODA [*at the writing-table*]. Well, Mr. Lövborg, this is rather a late hour to call for Thea.

LÖV. You mean rather an early hour to call on you. Pray pardon me.

HEDDA. How do you know that she is still here?

LÖV. They told me at her lodgings that she had been out all night.

HEDDA [*going to the oval table*]. Did you notice anything about the people of the house when they said that?

LÖV. [*Looks inquiringly at her*]. Notice anything about them?

HEDDA. I mean, did they seem to think it odd?

LÖV. [*suddenly understanding.*] Oh, yes, of course! I am dragging her down with me! However, I didn't notice anything.—I suppose Tesman is not up yet?

HEDDA. No—I think not—

LÖV. When did he come home?

HEDDA. Very late.

LÖV. Did he tell you anything?

HEDDA. Yes, I gathered that you had had an exceedingly jolly evening at Judge Brack's.

LÖV. Nothing more?

HEDDA. I don't think so. However, I was so dreadfully sleepy—

[MRS. ELVSTED *enters through the curtains of the middle doorway.*]

MRS. ELVS. [*going towards him.*] Ah, Lövborg! At last——!

LÖV. Yes, at last. And too late!

MRS. ELVS. [*Looks anxiously at him.*] What is too late?

LÖV. Everything is too late now. It is all over with me.

MRS. ELVS. Oh no, no—don't say that!

LÖV. You will say the same when you hear—

MRS. ELVS. I won't hear anything!

HEDDA. Perhaps you would prefer to talk to her alone! If so, I will leave you.

LÖV. No, stay—you too. I beg you to stay.

MRS. ELVS. Yes, but I won't hear anything, I tell you.

LÖV. It is not last night's adventures that I want to talk about.

MRS. ELVS. What is it then—?

LÖV. I want to say that now our ways must part.

MRS. ELVS. Part!

HEDDA [*involuntarily*]. I knew it!

LÖV. You can be of no more service to me, Thea.

MRS. ELVS. How can you stand there and say that! No more service to you! Am I not to help you now, as before? Are we not to go on working together?

LÖV. Henceforward I shall do no work.

MRS. ELVS. [*despairingly*]. Then what am I to do with my life?

LÖV. You must try to live your life as if you had never known me.

MRS. ELVS. But you know I cannot do that!

LÖV. Try if you cannot, Thea. You must go home again—

MRS. ELVS. [*in vehement protest*]. Never in this world! Where you are, there will I be also! I will not let myself be driven away like this! I will remain here! I will be with you when the book appears.

HEDDA [*half aloud, in suspense*]. Ah yes—the book!

LÖV. [*Looks at her.*] My book and Thea's; for that is what it is.

MRS. ELVS. Yes, I feel that it is. And that is why I have a right to be with you when it appears! I will see with my own eyes how respect and honour pour in upon you afresh. And the happiness—the happiness—oh, I must share it with you!

LÖV. Thea—our book will never appear.

HEDDA. Ah!

MRS. ELVS. Never appear!

LÖV. Can never appear.

MRS. ELVS. [*in agonised foreboding*]. Lövborg—what have you done with the manuscript?

HEDDA. [*Looks anxiously at him*]. Yes, the manuscript—?

MRS. ELVS. Where is it?

LÖV. Oh! Thea—don't ask me about it!

MRS. ELVS. Yes, yes, I will know. I demand to be told at once.

LÖV. The manuscript— Well then—I have torn the manuscript into a thousand pieces.

MRS. ELVS. [*Shrieks*]. Oh no, no—!

HEDDA [*involuntarily*]. But that's not—

LÖV. [*Looks at her*]. Not true, you think?

HEDDA [*collecting herself*]. Oh, well, of course—since you say so. But it sounded so improbable—

LÖV. It is true, all the same.

MRS. ELVS. [*wringing her hands*]. Oh! God—oh! God, Hedda—torn his own work to pieces!

LÖV. I have torn my own life to pieces. So why should I not tear my life-work too—?

MRS. ELVS. And you did this last night?

LÖV. Yes, I tell you! Tore it into a thousand pieces and scattered them out the fiord—far out. There there is cool sea-water at any rate—let them drift

it—drift with the current and
vind. And then presently they
sink—deeper and deeper—as I
Thea.

s. Elvs. Do you know, Lövborg,
vhat you have done with the book
hall think of it to my dying day
ough you had killed a little child.

v. Yes, you are right. It is a
of child-murder.

s. Elvs. How could you, then—!
not the child belong to me, too?

dda [*almost inaudibly*]. Ah, the
—

s. Elvs. [*breathing heavily*]. It
over then. Well, well, now I will
Iedda.

dda. But you are not going away
town?

s. Elvs. Oh, I don't know what
l do. I see nothing but darkness
e me. [*She goes out by the hall*

dda. [*Stands waiting for a mo-*
. So you are not going to see
ome, Mr. Lövborg?

. I? Through the streets? Would
ave people see her walking with

dda. Of course I don't know what
ay have happened last night. But
o utterly irretrievable?

. It will not end with last night
now that perfectly well. And the
is that now I have no taste for
ort of life either. I won't begin
w. She has broken my courage
y power of braving life out.

dda [*looking straight before her*].
at pretty little fool has had her
s in a man's destiny. [*Looks at*
But all the same, how could
reat her so heartlessly?

Löv. Oh, don't say that it was heartless!

Hedda. To go and destroy what has filled her whole soul for months and years! You do not call that heartless!

Löv. To you I can tell the truth, Hedda.

Hedda. The truth?

Löv. First promise me—give me your word—that what I now confide to you Thea shall never know.

Hedda. I give you my word.

Löv. Good. Then let me tell you that what I said just now was untrue.

Hedda. About the manuscript?

Löv. Yes. I have not torn it to pieces—nor thrown it into the fiord.

Hedda. No, n— But—where is it then?

Löv. I have destroyed it none the less—utterly destroyed it, Hedda!

Löv. Thea said that what I had done seemed to her like a child-murder.

Hedda. Yes, so she said.

Löv. But to kill this child—that is not the worst thing a father can do to it.

Hedda. Not the worst?

Löv. No. I wanted to spare Thea from hearing the worst.

Hedda. Then what is the worst?

Löv. Suppose now, Hedda, that a man—in the small hours of the morning came home to his child's mother after a night of riot and debauchery, and said: "Listen—I have been here and there—in this place and in that. And I have taken our child with me—to this place and to that. And I have lost the child—utterly lost it. The devil knows into what hands it may have fallen—who may have had their clutches on it."

HEDDA. Well—but when all is said and done, you know—that was only a book—

LÖV. Thea's pure soul was in that book.

HEDDA. Yes, so I understand.

LÖV. And you can understand, too, that for her and me together no future is possible.

HEDDA. What path do you mean to take then?

LÖV. None. I will only try to make an end of it all—the sooner the better.

HEDDA. I don't understand.

HEDDA [*a step nearer to him.*] Eilert Lövborg—listen to me. Will you not try to—to do it beautifully?

LÖV. Beautifully? [*Smiling*]. With vine-leaves in my hair as you used to dream in the old days—?

HEDDA. No, no. I have lost my faith in the vine-leaves. But beautifully, nevertheless! For once in a way!—Good-bye! You must go now—and do not come here any more.

LÖV. Good-bye, Mrs. Tesman. And give George Tesman my love. [*He is on the point of going.*]

HEDDA. No, wait! I must give you a memento to take with you.

[*She goes to the writing-table and opens the drawer and the pistol-case; then returns to* LÖV. *with one of the pistols.*]

LÖV. [*looks at her.*] This? Is this the memento?

HEDDA [*nodding slowly*]. Do you recognise it? It was aimed at you once.

LÖV. You should have used it then.

HEDDA. Take it—and do you use it now.

LÖV. [*puts the pistol in his breast pocket*]. Thanks!

HEDDA. And beautifully, Eilert Lövborg. Promise me that!

LÖV. Good-bye, Hedda Gabler. [*He goes out by the hall door.*]

[HEDDA *listens for a moment at the door. Then she goes up to the writing-table, takes out the packet of manuscript, peeps under the cover, draws a few of the sheets half out, and looks at them. Next she goes over and seats herself in the arm-chair beside the stove, with the packet in her lap. Presently she opens the stove door, and then the packet.*]

HEDDA [*throws one of the quires into the fire and whispers to herself*]. Now I am burning your child, Thea!—Burning it, curly-locks! [*Throwing one or two more quires into the stove.*] Your child and Eilert Lövborg's. [*Throws the rest in.*] I am burning—I am burning your child.

ACT IV

SCENE—*The same rooms at the* TESMANS'. *It is evening. The drawing-room is in darkness. The back room is lighted by the hanging lamp over the table. The curtains over the glass door are drawn close.*

HEDDA, *dressed in black, walks to and fro in the dark room. Then she goes into the back room and disappears for a moment to the left. She is heard to strike a few chords on the piano. Presently she comes in sight again, and returns to the drawing-room.*

BERTA *enters from the right, through the inner room, with a lighted lamp, which she places on the table in front of the corner settee in the drawing-room. Her eyes are red with weeping, and she has black ribbons in her cap. She goes quietly and circumspectly out to the right.*

DDA *goes up to the glass door, lifts urtain a little aside, and looks out the darkness.*

ortly afterwards, MISS TESMAN, *ourning, with a bonnet and veil omes in from the hall.* HEDDA *goes rds her and holds out her hand.*

SS TES. Yes, Hedda, here I am, ourning and forlorn; for now my sister has at last found peace.

EDDA. I have heard the news al-, as you see, Tesman sent me a

SS TES. Yes, he promised me he l. But nevertheless I thought that edda—here in the house of life—ght myself to bring the tidings ath.

DDA. That was very kind of you.

SS TES. Ah, Rina ought not to left us just now. This is not the for Hedda's house to be a house ourning.

DDA [*changing the subject*]. She quite peacefully, did she not, Miss an?

SS TES. Oh, her end was so calm, autiful. And then she had the un-able happiness of seeing George more—and bidding him good-bye. s he come home yet?

DDA. No. He wrote that he might tained. But won't you sit down?

SS TES. No thank you, my dear, Hedda, I should like to, but I so much to do. I must prepare ear one for her rest as well as I She shall go to her grave looking est.

DDA. Can I not help you in any

SS TES. Oh, you must not think ! Hedda Tesman must have no in such mournful work. Nor let her thoughts dwell on it either—not at this time.

HEDDA. One is not always mistress of one's thoughts——

MISS TES. [*continuing*]. Ah yes, it is the way of the world. At home we shall be sewing a shroud; and here there will soon be sewing too, I suppose—but of another sort, thank God!

GEORGE TESMAN *enters by the hall door.*

HEDDA. Ah, you have come at last!

TES. You here, Aunt Julia? With Hedda? Fancy that!

MISS TES. I was just going, my dear boy. Well, have you done all you promised?

TES. No; I'm really afraid I have forgotten half of it. I must come to you again to-morrow. To-day my brain is all in a whirl. I can't keep my thoughts together.

MISS TES. Why, my dear George, you mustn't take it in this way.

TES. Mustn't——? How do you mean?

MISS TES. Even in your sorrow you must rejoice, as I do—rejoice that she is at rest.

TES. Oh yes, yes—you are thinking of Aunt Rina.

HEDDA. You will feel lonely now, Miss Tesman.

MISS TES. Just at first, yes. But that will not last very long, I hope. I daresay I shall soon find an occupant for poor Rina's little room.

TES. Indeed? Who do you think will take it? Eh?

MISS TES. Oh, there's always some poor invalid or other in want of nursing, unfortunately.

HEDDA. Would you really take such a burden upon you again?

MISS TES. A burden! Heaven forgive you, child—it has been no burden to me.

HEDDA. But suppose you had a total stranger on your hands——

MISS TES. Oh, one soon makes friends with sick folk; and it's such an absolute necessity for me to have some one to live for. Well, heaven be praised, there may soon be something in this house, too, to keep an old aunt busy.

HEDDA. Oh, don't trouble about anything here.

TES. Yes, just fancy what a nice time we three might have together, if——?

HEDDA. If——?

TES. [*uneasily*]. Oh, nothing. It will all come right. Let us hope so—eh?

MISS TES. Well, well, I daresay you two want to talk to each other. [*Smiling.*] And perhaps Hedda may have something to tell you too, George. Good-bye! I must go home to Rina. [*Turning at the door.*] How strange it is to think that now Rina is with me and with my poor brother as well!

TES. Yes, fancy that, Aunt Julia! Eh?

[MISS TESMAN *goes out by the hall door.*]

HEDDA [*follows* TESMAN *coldly and searchingly with her eyes*]. I almost believe your Aunt Rina's death affects you more than it does your Aunt Julia.

TES. Oh, it's not that alone. It's Eilert I am so terribly uneasy about.

HEDDA [*quickly*]. Is there anything new about him?

TES. I looked in at his rooms this afternoon, intending to tell him the manuscript was in safe keeping.

HEDDA. Well, did you not find him?

TES. No. He wasn't at home. Bu afterwards I met Mrs. Elvsted, an she told me that he had been here earl this morning.

HEDDA. Yes, directly after you ha gone.

TES. And he said that he had tor his manuscript to pieces—eh?

HEDDA. Yes, so he declared.

TES. Why, good heavens, he mus have been completely out of his mind And I suppose you thought it best no to give it back to him, Hedda?

HEDDA. No, he did not get it.

TES. But of course you told hi that we had it?

HEDDA. No. [*Quickly.*] Did yo tell Mrs. Elvsted?

TES. No; I thought I had bette not. But you ought to have told hi Fancy, if, in desperation, he shoul go and do himself some injury! Le me have the manuscript, Hedda! I wi take it to him at once. Where is it?

HEDDA [*cold and immovable, leanin on the arm-chair*]. I have not got i

TES. Have not got it? What in th world do you mean?

HEDDA. I have burnt it—every lin of it.

TES. [*with a violent movement o terror*]. Burnt! Burnt Eilert's manu script!

HEDDA. Don't scream so. The se vant might hear you.

TES. Burnt! Why, good God—— No, no, no! It's impossible!

HEDDA. It is so, nevertheless.

TES. Do you know what you hav done, Hedda? It's unlawful appropri tion of lost property. Fancy that! Ju ask Judge Brack, and he'll tell yo what it is.

HEDDA. I advise you not to spea

it—either to Judge Brack, or to any
e else.

TES. But how could you do anything
unheard-of? What put it into your
ad? What possessed you? Answer
that—eh?

HEDDA [*suppressing an almost im-
rceptible smile*]. I did it for your
ke, George.

TES. For my sake!

HEDDA. This morning, when you told
about what he had read to you——

TES. Yes, yes—what then?

HEDDA. You acknowledged that you
vied him his work.

TES. Oh, of course I didn't mean
at literally.

HEDDA. No matter—I could not bear
e idea that anyone should throw you
o the shade.

TES. [*in an outburst of mingled
ubt and joy*]. Hedda! Oh, is this
ue? But—but—I never knew you to
ow your love like that before. Fancy
it!

HEDDA. Well, I may as well tell you
at—just at this time—— [*Impa-
ntly breaking off.*] No, no; you can
k Aunt Julia. She will tell you, fast
ough.

TES. Oh, I almost think I under-
nd you, Hedda! [*Clasps his hands
ether.*] Great heavens! Do you
lly mean it! Eh?

HEDDA. Don't shout so. The servant
ght hear.

TES. [*laughing in irrepressible glee.*]
e servant! Why, how absurd you
, Hedda. It's only my old Berta.
ay, I'll tell Berta myself.

HEDDA [*clenching her hands together
desperation*]. Oh, it is killing me,—
s killing me, all this!

TES. What is, Hedda? Eh?

HEDDA [*coldly, controlling herself*].
All this—absurdity—George.

TES. Absurdity! Do you see any-
thing absurd in my being overjoyed
at the news! But after all—perhaps
I had better not say anything to Berta.

HEDDA. Oh—why not that too?

TES. No, no, not yet! But I must
certainly tell Aunt Julia. And then
that you have begun to call me George
too! Fancy that! Oh, Aunt Julia will
be so happy—so happy!

HEDDA. When she hears that I have
burnt Eilert Lövborg's manuscript—
for your sake?

TES. No, by-the-bye—that affair of
the manuscript—of course nobody must
know about that. But that you love
me so much, Hedda—Aunt Julia must
really share my joy in that! I wonder,
now, whether this sort of thing is usual
in young wives? Eh?

HEDDA. I think you had better ask
Aunt Julia that question too.

TES. I will indeed, some time or
other. [*Looks uneasy and downcast
again.*] And yet the manuscript—the
manuscript! Good God! It is terrible
to think what will become of poor
Eilert now.

MRS. ELVSTED, *dressed as in the first
Act, with hat and cloak, enters by
the hall door.*

MRS. ELVS. [*greets them hurriedly,
and says in evident agitation*]. Oh,
dear Hedda, forgive my coming again.

HEDDA. What is the matter with you,
Thea?

TES. Something about Eilert Löv-
borg again—eh?

MRS. ELVS. Yes! I am dreadfully
afraid some misfortune has happened
to him.

HEDDA [*seizes her arm*]. Ah,—do you think so?

TES. Why, good Lord—what makes you think that, Mrs. Elvsted?

MRS. ELVS. I heard them talking of him at my boarding-house—just as I came in. Oh, the most incredible rumours are afloat about him to-day.

TES. Yes, fancy, so I heard too! And I can bear witness that he went straight home to bed last night. Fancy that!

HEDDA. Well, what did they say at the boarding-house?

MRS. ELVS. Oh, I couldn't make out anything clearly. Either they knew nothing definite, or else— They stopped talking when they saw me; and I did not dare to ask.

TES. [*moving about uneasily*]. We must hope—we must hope that you misunderstood them, Mrs. Elvsted.

MRS. ELVS. No, no; I am sure it was of him they were talking. And I heard something about the hospital or—

TES. The hospital?

HEDDA. No—surely that cannot be!

MRS. ELVS. Oh, I was in such mortal terror! I went to his lodgings and asked for him there.

HEDDA. You could make up your mind to that, Thea!

MRS. ELVS. What else could I do? I really could bear the suspense no longer.

TES. But you didn't find him either —eh?

MRS. ELVS. No. And the people knew nothing about him. He hadn't been home since yesterday afternoon, they said.

TES. Yesterday! Fancy, how could they say that?

MRS. ELVS. Oh, I am sure something terrible must have happened to him

TES. Hedda dear—how would it b if I were to go and make inquiries—

HEDDA. No, no—don't you mix your self up in this affair.

JUDGE BRACK, *with his hat in h hand, enters by the hall door, whic* BERTA *opens, and closes behind him. H looks grave and bows in silence.*

TES. Oh, is that you, my dea Judge? Eh?

BRACK. Yes. It was imperative should see you this evening.

TES. I can see you have heard th news about Aunt Rina.

BRACK. Yes, that among other thing

TES. Isn't it sad—eh?

BRACK. Well, my dear Tesman, tha depends on how you look at it.

TES. [*looks doubtfully at him*]. Ha anything else happened?

BRACK. Yes.

HEDDA [*in suspense*]. Anything sa Judge Brack?

BRACK. That too, depends on ho you look at it, Mrs. Tesman.

MRS. ELVS. [*unable to restrain h anxiety*]. Oh! it is something abo Eilert Lövborg!

BRACK [*with a glance at her*]. Wh makes you think that, Madam? Pe haps you have already heard som thing——?

MRS. ELVS. [*in confusion*]. No, n thing at all, but——

TES. Oh, for heaven's sake, tell u

BRACK [*shrugging his shoulders* Well, I regret to say Eilert Lövbo has been taken to the hospital. He lying at the point of death.

MRS. ELVS. [*shrieks*]. Oh God! God——!

TES. To the hospital! And at t point of death.

HEDDA [*involuntarily*]. So soon
n——
MRS. ELVS. [*wailing*]. And we parted
anger, Hedda!
HEDDA [*whispers*]. Thea—Thea—be
eful!
MRS. ELVS. [*not heeding her*]. I
st go to him! I must see him alive!
BRACK. It is useless, Madam. No
e will be admitted.
MRS. ELVS. Oh, at least tell me what
happened to him? What is it?
TES. You don't mean to say that he
himself—— Eh?
HEDDA. Yes, I am sure he has.
TES. Hedda, how can you——?
BRACK [*keeping his eyes fixed upon*
]. Unfortunately you have guessed
te correctly, Mrs. Tesman.
MRS. ELVS. Oh, how horrible!
TES. Himself, then! Fancy that!
HEDDA. Shot himself!
BRACK. Rightly guessed again, Mrs.
sman.
MRS. ELVS. [*with an effort at self-*
trol]. When did it happen, Mr.
ack?
BRACK. This afternoon between
ee and four.
TES. But, good Lord, where did he
it? Eh?
BRACK [*with some hesitation*].
here? Well—I suppose at his lodg-
s.
MRS. ELVS. No, that cannot be; for
vas there between six and seven.
BRACK. Well, then, somewhere else.
on't know exactly. I only know that
was found——. He had shot himself
n the breast.
MRS. ELVS. Oh, how terrible! That
should die like that!
HEDDA [*to Brack*]. Was it in the
ast?

BRACK. Yes—as I told you.
HEDDA. Not in the temple?
BRACK. In the breast, Mrs. Tesman.
HEDDA. Well, well—the breast is a good place, too.
BRACK. How do you mean, Mrs. Tesman?
HEDDA [*evasively*]. Oh, nothing—nothing.
TES. And the wound is dangerous, you say—eh?
BRACK. Absolutely mortal. The end has probably come by this time.
MRS. ELVS. Yes, yes, I feel it. The end! The end! Oh, Hedda——!
TES. But tell me, how have you learnt all this?
BRACK [*curtly*]. Through one of the police. A man I had some business with.
HEDDA [*in a clear voice*]. At last a deed worth doing!
TES. [*terrified*]. Good heavens, Hedda! What are you saying?
HEDDA. I say there is beauty in this.
BRACK. H'm, Mrs. Tesman——
TES. Beauty! Fancy that!
MRS. ELVS. Oh, Hedda, how can you talk of beauty in such an act!
HEDDA. Eilert Lövborg has himself made up his account with life. He has had the courage to do—the one right thing.
MRS. ELVS. No, you must never think that was how it happened! It must have been in delirium that he did it.
TES. In despair!
HEDDA. That he did not. I am certain of that.
MRS. ELVS. Yes, yes! In delirium! Just as when he tore up our manuscript.

BRACK [*starting*]. The manuscript? Has he torn that up?

MRS. ELVS. Yes, last night.

TES. [*whispers softly*]. Oh, Hedda, we shall never get over this.

BRACK. H'm, very extraordinary.

TES. [*moving about the room*]. To think of Eilert going out of the world in this way! And not leaving behind him the book that would have immortalised his name——

MRS. ELVS. Oh, if only it could be put together again!

TES. Yes, if it only could! I don't know what I would not give——

MRS. ELVS. Perhaps it can, Mr. Tesman.

TES. What do you mean?

MRS. ELVS [*searches in the pocket of her dress*]. Look here. I have kept all the loose notes he used to dictate from.

HEDDA [*a step forward*]. Ah——!

TES. You have kept them, Mrs. Elvsted! Eh?

MRS. ELVS. Yes, I have them here. I put them in my pocket when I left home. Here they still are—

TES. Oh, do let me see them!

MRS. ELVS. [*hands him a bundle of papers*]. But they are in such disorder —all mixed up.

TES. Fancy, if we could make something out of them, after all! Perhaps if we two put our heads together——

MRS. ELVS. Oh, yes, at least let us try——

TES. We will manage it! We must! I will dedicate my life to this task.

HEDDA. You, George? Your life?

TES. Yes, or rather all the time I can spare. My own collections must wait in the meantime. Hedda—you understand, eh? I owe this to Eilert's memory.

HEDDA. Perhaps.

TES. And so, my dear Mrs. Elvsted we will give our whole minds to it. There is no use in brooding over what can't be undone—eh? We must try to control our grief as much as possible and——

MRS. ELVS. Yes, yes, Mr. Tesman, I will do the best I can.

TES. Well then, come here. I can't rest until we have looked through the notes. Where shall we sit? Here? No, in there, in the back room. Excuse me my dear Judge. Come with me, Mrs. Elvsted.

MRS. ELVS. Oh, if only it were possible! [TESMAN *and* MRS. ELVSTED *go into the back room. She takes off her hat and cloak. They both sit at the table under the hanging lamp, and are soon deep in an eager examination of the papers.* HEDDA *crosses to the stove and sits in the arm-chair. Presently* BRACK *goes up to her.*]

HEDDA [*in a low voice*]. Oh, what sense of freedom it gives one, this act of Eilert Lövborg's.

BRACK. Freedom, Mrs. Hedda? Well of course, it is a release for him——

HEDDA. I mean for me. It gives me a sense of freedom to know that a deed of deliberate courage is still possible in this world,—a deed of spontaneous beauty.

BRACK [*smiling*]. H'm—my dear Mrs. Hedda——

HEDDA. Oh, I know what you are going to say. For you are a kind of specialist too, like—you know!

BRACK [*looking hard at her*]. Eilert Lövborg was more to you than perhaps you are willing to admit to yourself. Am I wrong?

HEDDA. I don't answer such ques

ns. I only know Eilert Lövborg has d the courage to live his life after s own fashion. And then—the last eat act, with its beauty! Ah! That should have the will and the strength turn away from the banquet of life so early.

BRACK. I am sorry, Mrs. Hedda,— t I fear I must dispel an amiable usion.

HEDDA. Illusion.

BRACK. Which could not have lasted ng in any case.

HEDDA. What do you mean?

BRACK. Eilert Lövborg did not shoot nself voluntarily.

HEDDA. Not voluntarily?

BRACK. No. The thing did not hapn exactly as I told it.

HEDDA [*in suspense*]. Have you ncealed something? What is it?

BRACK. For poor Mrs. Elvsted's ke I idealized the facts a little.

HEDDA. What are the facts?

BRACK. First, that he is already ad.

HEDDA. At the hospital?

BRACK. Yes—without regaining conousness.

HEDDA. What more have you conled?

BRACK. This—the event did not hapn at his lodgings.

HEDDA. Oh, that can make no difence.

BRACK. Perhaps it may. For I must you—Eilert Lövborg was found t in—in Mademoiselle Diana's bour.

HEDDA [*makes a motion as if to rise, sinks back again*]. That is impose, Judge Brack! He cannot have n there again to-day.

BRACK. He was there this afternoon. He went there, he said, to demand the return of something which they had taken from him. Talked wildly about a lost child——

HEDDA. Ah—so that was why——

BRACK. I thought probably he meant his manuscript; but now I hear he destroyed that himself. So I suppose it must have been his pocketbook.

HEDDA. Yes, no doubt. And there—there he was found?

BRACK. Yes, there. With a pistol in his breast-pocket, discharged. The ball had lodged in a vital part.

HEDDA. In the breast—yes.

BRACK. No—in the bowels.

HEDDA [*looks up at him with an expression of loathing*]. That too! Oh, what curse is it that makes everything I touch turn ludicrous and mean?

BRACK. There is one point more, Mrs. Hedda—another disagreeable feature in the affair.

HEDDA. And what is that?

BRACK. The pistol he carried——

HEDDA [*breathless*]. Well? What of it?

BRACK. He must have stolen it.

HEDDA [*leaps up*]. Stolen it! That is not true! He did not steal it!

BRACK. No other explanation is possible. He must have stolen it——Hush!

TESMAN *and* MRS. ELVSTED *have risen from the table in the back room, and come into the drawing room.*

TES. [*with the papers in both his hands*]. Hedda dear, it is almost impossible to see under that lamp. Think of that!

HEDDA. Yes, I am thinking.

TES. Would you mind our sitting at your writing-table—eh?

HEDDA. If you like. [*Quickly.*] No, wait! Let me clear it first.

TES. Oh, you needn't trouble, Hedda. There is plenty of room.

HEDDA. No, no; let me clear it, I say! I will take these things in and put them on the piano. There! [*She has drawn out an object, covered with sheet music, from under the book-case, places several other pieces of music upon it, and carries the whole into the inner room, to the left.* TESMAN *lays the scraps of paper on the writing-table, and moves the lamp there from the corner table.* HEDDA *returns.*]

HEDDA [*behind* MRS. ELVSTED'S *chair, gently ruffling her hair*]. Well, my sweet Thea,—how goes it with Eilert Lövborg's monument?

MRS. ELVS. [*looks dispiritedly up at her*]. Oh, it will be terribly hard to put in order.

TES. We must manage it. I am determined. And arranging other people's papers is just the work for me. [HEDDA *goes over to the stove, and seats herself on one of the footstools.* BRACK *stands over her, leaning on the arm-chair.*

HEDDA [*whispers*]. What did you say about the pistol?

BRACK [*softly*]. That he must have stolen it.

HEDDA. Why stolen it?

BRACK. Because every other explanation ought to be impossible, Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA. Indeed?

BRACK [*glances at her*]. Of course Eilert Lövborg was here this morning. Was he not?

HEDDA. Yes.

BRACK. Were you alone with him?

HEDDA. Part of the time.

BRACK. Did you not leave the room whilst he was here?

HEDDA. No.

BRACK. Try to recollect. Were you not out of the room a moment?

HEDDA. Yes, perhaps just a moment —out in the hall.

BRACK. And where was your pistol-case during that time?

HEDDA. I had it locked up in——

BRACK. Well, Mrs. Hedda?

HEDDA. The case stood there on the writing-table.

BRACK. Have you looked since, to see whether both the pistols are there?

HEDDA. No.

BRACK. Well, you need not. I saw the pistol found in Lövborg's pocket, and I knew it at once as the one I had seen yesterday—and before, too.

HEDDA. Have you it with you?

BRACK. No, the police have it.

HEDDA. What will the police do with it?

BRACK. Search till they find the owner.

HEDDA. Do you think they will succeed?

BRACK [*bends over her and whispers*]. No, Hedda Gabler—not so long as I say nothing.

HEDDA [*looks frightened at him*]. And if you do not say nothing,—what then?

BRACK [*shrugs his shoulders*]. There is always the possibility that the pistol was stolen.

HEDDA [*firmly*]. Death rather than that.

BRACK [*smiling*]. People say such things—but they don't do them.

HEDDA [*without replying*]. And sup

ɔsing the pistol was stolen, and the ɹner is discovered? What then?

BRACK. Well, Hedda—then comes e scandal.

HEDDA. The scandal!

BRACK. Yes, the scandal—of which u are mortally afraid. You will, of ɹrse, be brought before the court—th you and Mademoiselle Diana. She ll have to explain how the thing ppened—whether it was an accidental ɔt or murder. Did the pistol go off he was trying to take it out of his cket, to threaten her with? Or did e tear the pistol out of his hand, ɔot him, and push it back into his cket? That would be quite like her; ' she is an able-bodied young person, s same Mademoiselle Diana.

HEDDA. But *I* have nothing to do h all this repulsive business.

BRACK. No. But you will have to ɯer the question: Why did you give ert Lövborg the pistol? And what ɔclusions will people draw from the t that you did give it to him?

HEDDA [*lets her head sink*]. That is e. I did not think of that.

BRACK. Well, fortunately, there is danger, so long as I say nothing.

HEDDA [*looks up at him*]. So I am ɹour power, Judge Brack. You have at your beck and call, from this e forward.

BRACK [*whispers softly*]. Dearest dda—believe me—I shall not abuse advantage.

HEDDA. I am in your power none less. Subject to your will and your ands. A slave, a slave then! [*Rises ɐetuously.*] No, I cannot endure the ıght of that! Never!

BRACK [*looks half-mockingly at her*]. People generally get used to the inevitable.

HEDDA [*returns his look*]. Yes, perhaps. [*She crosses to the writing-table. Suppressing an involuntary smile, she imitates* TESMAN'S *intonations.*] Well? Are you getting on, George? Eh?

TES. Heaven knows, dear. In any case it will be the work of months.

HEDDA [*as before*]. Fancy that! [*passes her hands softly through* MRS. ELVSTED'S *hair.*] Doesn't it seem strange to you, Thea? Here are you sitting with Tesman—just as you used to sit with Eilert Lövborg?

MRS. ELVS. Ah, if I could only inspire your husband in the same way.

HEDDA. Oh, that will come too—in time.

TES. Yes, do you know, Hedda—I really think I begin to feel something of the sort. But won't you go and sit with Brack again?

HEDDA. Is there nothing I can do to help you two?

TES. No, nothing in the world. [*Turning his head.*] I trust to you to keep Hedda company, my dear Brack.

BRACK [*with a glance at* HEDDA]. With the very greatest of pleasure.

HEDDA. Thanks. But I am tired this evening. I will go in and lie down a little on the sofa.

TES. Yes, do dear—eh? [HEDDA *goes into the back room and draws the curtains. A short pause. Suddenly she is heard playing a wild dance on the piano.*]

MRS. ELVS. [*starts from her chair*]. Oh—what is that.

TES. [*runs to the doorway*]. Why, my dearest Hedda—don't play dance

music to-night! Just think of Aunt Rina! And of Eilert too!

HEDDA [*puts her head out between the curtains*]. And of Aunt Julia. And of all the rest of them.—After this, I will be quiet. [*Closes the curtains again.*]

TES. [*at the writing-table*]. It's not good for her to see us at this distressing work, I'll tell you what, Mrs. Elvsted, —you shall take the empty room at Aunt Julia's, and then I will come over in the evenings, and we can sit and work there—eh?

HEDDA [*in the inner room*]. I hear what you are saying, Tesman. But how am *I* to get through the evenings out here?

TES. [*turning over the papers*]. Oh, I daresay Judge Brack will be so kind as to look in now and then, even though I am out.

BRACK [*in the arm-chair, calls out gaily*]. Every blessed evening, with all the pleasure in life, Mrs. Tesman! We shall get on capitally together, we two!

HEDDA [*speaking loud and clear*]. Yes, don't you flatter yourself we will, Judge Brack? Now that you are the one cock in the backet—[*A shot is heard within.* TESMAN, MRS. ELVSTED, *and* BRACK *leap to their feet.*]

TES. Oh, now she is playing with those pistols again. [*He throws back the curtains and runs in, followed by* MRS. ELVSTED. HEDDA *lies stretched on the sofa, lifeless. Confusion and cries.* BERTA *enters in alarm from the right.*]

TES. [*shrieks to* BRACK]. Shot herself! Shot herself in the temple! Fancy that!

BRACK [*half-fainting in the arm-chair*]. Good God!—people don't do such things.

VOLUME II

Ghosts

THE PERSONS OF THE PLAY.

MRS. ALVING, *a widow.*
OSWALD ALVING, *her son, an artist.*
MANDERS, *the Pastor of the parish.*
ENGSTRAND, *a carpenter.*
REGINA ENGSTRAND, *his daughter, in Mrs. Alving's service.*

The action takes place at Mrs. Alving's house on one of the larger fjords of western Norway.

ACT I

SCENE—*A large room looking upon garden. A door in the left-hand wall, nd two in the right. In the middle of he room, a round table with chairs et about it, and books, magazines and ewspapers upon it. In the foreground n the left, a window, by which is a mall sofa with a work-table in front f it. At the back the room opens into conservatory rather smaller than the oom. From the right-hand side of is a door leads to the garden. Through he large panes of glass that form the uter wall of the conservatory, a loomy fjord landscape can be dis-erned, half obscured by steady rain.* ENGSTRAND *is standing close up to e garden door. His left leg is slightly eformed, and he wears a boot with a ump of wood under the sole.* REGINA, *ith an empty garden-syringe in her and, is trying to prevent his coming .*

REG. [*below her breath*]. What is it ou want? Stay where you are. The in is dripping off you.

ENG. God's good rain, my girl.

REG. The Devil's own rain, that's what it is!

ENG. Lord, how you talk, Regina. [*Takes a few limping steps forward.*] What I wanted to tell you was this—

REG. Don't clump about like that, stupid! The young master is lying asleep upstairs.

ENG. Asleep still? In the middle of the day?

REG. Well, it's no business of yours.

ENG. I was out on a spree last night—

REG. I don't doubt it

ENG. Yes, we are poor weak mortals, my girl—

REG. We are indeed.

ENG. —and the temptations of the world are manifold, you know—but, for all that, here I was at my work at half-past five this morning.

REG. Yes, yes, but make yourself scarce now. I am not going to stand here as if I had a *rendez-vous* with you.

ENG. As if you had a what?

REG. I am not going to have any one find you here; so now you know, and you can go.

ENG. [*coming a few steps nearer*]. Not a bit of it! Not before we have had a little chat. This afternoon I shall have finished my job down at the school house, and I shall be off home to town by to-night's boat.

REG. [*mutters*]. Pleasant journey to you!

ENG. Thanks, my girl. To-morrow is the opening of the Orphanage, and I expect there will be a fine kick-up here and plenty of good strong drink, don't you know. And no one shall say of Jacob Engstrand that he can't hold off when temptation comes in his way.

REG. Oho!

ENG. Yes, because there will be a lot of fine folk here to-morrow. Parson Manders is expected from town, too.

REG. What is more, he's coming to-day.

ENG. There you are! And I'm going to be precious careful he doesn't have anything to say against me, do you see?

REG. Oh, that's your game, is it?

ENG. What do you mean?

REG. [*with a significant look at him*]. What is it you want to humbug Mr. Manders out of, this time?

ENG. Sh! Sh! Are you crazy? Do you suppose *I* would want to humbug Mr. Manders? No, no—Mr. Manders has always been too kind a friend for me to do that. But what I wanted to talk to you about, was my going back home to-night.

REG. The sooner you go, the better I shall be pleased.

ENG. Yes, only I want to take you with me, Regina.

REG. [*open-mouthed*]. You want to take me—? What did you say?

ENG. I want to take you home with me, I said.

REG. [*contemptuously*]. You will never get me home with you.

ENG. Ah, we shall see about that.

REG. Yes, you can be quite certain we *shall* see about that. I, who have been brought up by a lady like Mrs. Alving?—I, who have been treated almost as if I were her own child?—do you suppose I am going home with *you?*—to such a house as yours? Not likely!

ENG. What the devil do you mean? Are you setting yourself up against your father, you hussy?

REG. [*mutters, without looking at him*]. You have often told me I was none of yours.

ENG. Bah!—why do you want to pay any attention to that?

REG. Haven't you many and many a time abused me and called me a—? For shame!

ENG. I'll swear I never used such an ugly word.

REG. Oh, it doesn't matter what word you used.

ENG. Besides, that was only when I was a bit fuddled—hm! Temptations are manifold in this world, Regina.

REG. Ugh!

ENG. And it was when your mother was in a nasty temper. I had to find some way of getting my knife into her, my girl. She was always so precious genteel. [*Mimicking her.*] "Let go, Jacob! Let me be! Please to remember that I was three years with the Alvings at Rosenvold, and they were people who went to Court!" [*Laughs.*] Bless my soul, she never could forget that Captain Alving got a Court appointment while she was in service here.

REG. Poor mother—you worried her into her grave pretty soon.

ENG. [*shrugging his shoulders*]. Of course, of course; I have got to take the blame for everything.

REG. [*beneath her breath, as she turns away*]. Ugh—that leg, too!

ENG. What are you saying, my girl?

REG. *Pied de mouton.*

ENG. Is that English?

REG. Yes.

ENG. You have had a good education
it here, and no mistake; and it may
and you in good stead now, Regina.

REG. [*after a short silence*]. And
hat was it you wanted me to come to
wn for?

ENG. Need you ask why a father
ants his only child? Ain't I a poor
nely widower?

REG. Oh, don't come to me with that
le. Why do you want me to go?

ENG. Well, I must tell you I am
inking of taking up a new line now.

REG. [*whistles*]. You have tried that
often—but it has always proved a
ol's errand.

ENG. Ah, but this time you will just
e, Regina! Strike me dead if—

REG. [*stamping her foot*]. Stop
earing!

ENG. Sh! Sh!—you're quite right,
y girl, quite right! What I wanted
say was only this, that I have put
a tidy penny out of what I have
ade by working at this new Orphan-
e up here.

REG. Have you? All the better for
u.

ENG. What is there for a man to
end his money on, out here in the
untry?

REG. Well, what then?

ENG. Well, you see, I thought of
tting the money into something that
uld pay. I thought of some kind of
eating-house for seafaring folk—

REG. Heavens!

ENG. Oh, a high-class eating-house,
course,—not a pigsty for common
lors. Damn it, no; it would be a
ace ships' captains and first mates
would come to; really good sort of
people, you know.

REG. And what should I—?

ENG. You would help there. But
only to make a show, you know. You
wouldn't find it hard work, I promise
you, my girl. You should do exactly
as you like.

REG. Oh, yes, quite so!

ENG. But we must have some women
in the house; that is as clear as day-
light. Because in the evening we must
make the place a little attractive—some
singing and dancing, and that sort of
thing. Remember they are seafolk—
wayfarers of the waters of life! [*Com-
ing nearer to her.*] Now don't be a
fool and stand in your own way, Re-
gina. What good are you going to do
here? Will this education that your
mistress has paid for, be of any use?
You are to look after the children in
the new Home, I hear. Is that the sort
of work for you? Are you so fright-
fully anxious to go and wear out your
health and strength for the sake of
these dirty brats?

REG. No, if things were to go as I
want them to, then—. Well, it may
happen; who knows? It may happen!

ENG. What may happen?

REG. Never you mind. Is it much
that you have put by, up here?

ENG. Taking it all round, I should
say about forty or fifty pounds.

REG. That's not so bad.

ENG. It's enough to make a start
with, my girl.

REG. Don't you mean to give me
any of the money?

ENG. No, I'm hanged if I do.

REG. Don't you mean to send me as
much as a dress-length of stuff, just
for once?

ENG. Come and ɔn't know whether it
me and you sha thing, at my age, to
dresses. single man.

REG. Pooh!—I My dear Miss Eng-
for myself, if I ur own father we are

ENG. But it's
father's guiding dare say, but still—.
now I can get e in a good house and
Harbour Stre entleman—
money dow t, my dear Regina—
it like a —one whom I could feel an
you kn for, and really feel in the po-

RE of a daughter to—
liv MAN. Come, come—my dear good
child—

REG. I should like very much to live in town. Out here it is terribly lonely; and you know yourself, Mr. Manders, what it is to be alone in the world. And, though I say it, I really am both capable and willing. Don't you know any place that would be suitable for me, Mr. Manders?

MAN. I? No, indeed I don't.

REG. But, dear Mr. Manders—at any rate don't forget me, in case—

MAN. [*getting up*]. No, I won't forget you, Miss Engstrand.

REG. Because, if I—

MAN. Perhaps you will be so kind as to let Mrs. Alving know I am here?

REG. I will fetch her at once, Mr. Manders. [*Goes out to the left.* MANDERS *walks up and down the room once or twice, stands for a moment at the farther end of the room with his hands behind his back and looks out into the garden. Then he comes back to the table, takes up a book and looks at the title page, gives a start, and looks at some of the others.*]

MAN. Hm!—Really!

[MRS. ALVING *comes in by the door on the left. She is followed by* REGINA, *who goes out again at once through the nearer door on the right.*]

MRS. ALV. [*holding out her hand*]. I am very glad to see you, Mr. Manders.

MAN. How do you do, Mrs. Alving. Here I am, as I promised.

MRS. ALV. Always punctual!

MAN. Indeed, I was hard put to it to get away. What with vestry meetings and committees—

MRS. ALV. It was all the kinder of you to come in such good time; we can settle our business before dinner. But where is your luggage?

MAND. [*quickly*]. My things are down at the village shop. I am going to sleep there to-night.

MRS. ALV. [*repressing a smile*] Can't I really persuade you to stay the night here this time?

MAN. No, no; many thanks all the same; I will put up there, as usual. It is so handy for getting on board the boat again.

MRS. ALV. Of course you shall do as you please. But it seems to me quite another thing, now we are two old people—

MAN. Ha! Ha! You will have your joke! And it's natural you should be in high spirits to-day—first of all there is the great event to-morrow, and also you have got Oswald home.

MRS. ALV. Yes, am I not a lucky woman! It is more than two years since he was home last, and he has promised to stay the whole winter with me.

MAN. Has he, really? That is very nice and filial of him; because there must be many more attractions in his life in Rome or in Paris, I should think.

MRS. ALV. Yes, but he has his other here, you see. Bless the dear y, he has got a corner in his heart his mother still.

MAN. Oh, it would be very sad if sence and pre-occupation with such hing as Art were to dull the natural ections.

MRS. ALV. It would, indeed. But re is no fear of that with him, I am d to say. I am quite curious to see you recognise him again. He will down directly; he is just lying down a little on the sofa upstairs. But sit down, my dear friend.

MAN. Thank you. You are sure I not disturbing you?

MRS. ALV. Of course not. [*She sits vn at the table.*]

MAN. Good. Then I will show you [*He goes to the chair where his is lying and takes a packet of pers from it; then sits down at the posite side of the table and looks a clear space to put the papers vn.*] Now first of all, here is—*eaks off*]. Tell me, Mrs. Alving, at are these books doing here?

MRS. ALV. These books? I am ding them.

MAN. Do you read this sort of ng?

MRS. ALV. Certainly I do.

MAN. Do you feel any the better or happier for reading books of this d?

MRS. ALV. I think it makes me, as ere, more self-reliant.

MAN. That is remarkable! But ?

MRS. ALV. Well, they give me an lanation or a confirmation of lots different ideas that have come into own mind. But what surprises me, Mr. Manders, is that ing, there is nothing books. There is noth than what most peop lieve. The only thin people either take no won't admit it to them

MAN. But, good heav riously think that most p

MRS. ALV. Yes, indeed,

MAN. But not here in th at any rate? Not here amongs like ourselves?

MRS. ALV. Yes, amongst people ourselves too.

MAN. Well, really, I must say—!

MRS. ALV. But what is the particular objection that you have to these books?

MAN. What objection? You surely don't suppose that I take any particular interest in such productions?

MRS. ALV. In fact, you don't know anything about what you are denouncing?

MAN. I have read quite enough about these books to disapprove of them.

MRS. ALV. Yes, but your own opinion—

MAN. My dear Mrs. Alving, there are many occasions in life when one has to rely on the opinion of others. That is the way in this world, and it is quite right that it should be so. What would become of society, otherwise?

MRS. ALV. Well, you may be right.

MAN. Apart from that, naturally I don't deny that literature of this kind may have a considerable attraction. And I cannot blame you, either, for wishing to make yourself acquainted with the intellectual tendencies which I am told are at work in the wider world in which you have allowed your

so long. But—
—?
his voice]. But one
it, Mrs. Alving. One
alled upon to account
or what one reads or
privacy of one's own

Certainly not. I quite
you.
Just think of the considera-
I owe to this Orphanage, which
ecided to build at a time when
ir thoughts on such subjects were
very different from what they are now
—as far as I am able to judge.

MRS. ALV. Yes, I freely admit that. But it was about the Orphanage—

MAN. It was about the Orphanage we were going to talk; quite so. Well —walk warily, dear Mrs. Alving! And now let us turn to the business in hand. [*Opens an envelope and takes out some papers.*] You see these?

MRS. ALV. The deeds?

MAN. Yes, the whole lot—and everything in order. I can tell you it has been no easy matter to get them in time. I had positively to put pressure on the authorities; they are almost painfully conscientious when it is a question of settling property. But here they are at last. [*Turns over the papers.*] Here is the deed of conveyance of that part of the Rosenvold estate known as the Solvik property, together with the buildings newly erected thereon — the school, the master's houses and the chapel. And here is the legal sanction for the statutes of the institution. Here you see—[*reads*] "Statutes for the Captain Alving Orphanage."

MRS. ALV. [*after a long look at the papers*]. That seems all in order.

MAN. I thought "Captain" was the better title to use, rather than your husband's Court title of "Chamberlain." "Captain" seems less ostentatious.

MRS. ALV. Yes, yes; just as you think best.

MAN. And here is the certificate for the investment of the capital in the bank, the interest being earmarked for the current expenses of the Orphanage.

MRS. ALV. Many thanks; but I think it will be most convenient if you will kindly take charge of them.

MAN. With pleasure. I think it will be best to leave the money in the bank for the present. The interest is no very high, it is true; four per cent at six months' call. Later on, if we can find some good mortgage—of course it must be a first mortgage and on unexceptionable security—we can consider the matter further.

MRS. ALV. Yes, yes, my dear Mr Manders, you know best about all that.

MAN. I will keep my eye on it, anyway. But there is one thing in connection with it that I have often meant to ask you about.

MRS. ALV. What is that?

MAN. Shall we insure the buildings or not?

MRS. ALV. Of course we must insure them.

MAN. Ah, but wait a moment, dear lady. Let us look into the matter a little more closely.

MRS. ALV. Everything of mine is insured—the house and its contents, my livestock—everything.

MAN. Naturally. They are you

n property. I do exactly the same, course. But this, you see, is quite different case. The Orphanage is, to speak, dedicated to higher uses.

MRS. ALV. Certainly, but—

MAN. As far as I am personally con- ned, I can conscientiously say that on't see the smallest objection to our uring ourselves against all risks.

MRS. ALV. That is certainly what I nk.

MAN. But what about the opinion the people hereabouts?

MRS. ALV. Their opinion—?

MAN. Is there any considerable body opinion here—opinion of some ac- nt, I mean—that might take ex- tion to it?

MRS. ALV. What, exactly, do you an by opinion of some account?

MAN. Well, I was thinking particu- y of persons of such independent influential position that one could dly refuse to attach weight to their nion.

MRS. ALV. There are a certain num- of such people here, who might haps take exception to it if we—

MAN. That's just it, you see. In n there are lots of them. All my ow-clergymen's congregations, for ance! It would be so extremely easy them to interpret it as meaning neither you nor I had a proper re- ce on Divine protection.

MRS. ALV. But as far as you are erned, my dear friend, you have at events the consciousness that—

MAN. Yes, I know, I know; my own l is quite easy about it, it is true. we should not be able to prevent a ng and injurious interpretation of action. And that sort of thing, eover, might very easily end in ex- ercising a hampering influence on the work of the Orphanage.

MRS. ALV. Oh, well, if that is likely to be the effect of it—

MAN. Nor can I entirely overlook the difficult—indeed, I may say, pain- ful—position I might possibly be placed in. In the best circles in town the matter of this Orphanage is at- tracting a great deal of attention. In- deed the Orphanage is to some extent built for the benefit of the town too, and it is to be hoped that it may re- sult in the lowering of our poor-rate by a considerable amount. But as I have been your adviser in the matter and have taken charge of the business side of it, I should be afraid that it would be I that spiteful persons would attack first of all—

MRS. ALV. Yes, you ought not to ex- pose yourself to that.

MAN. Not to mention the attacks that would undoubtedly be made upon me in certain newspapers and re- views—

MRS. ALV. Say no more about it, dear Mr. Manders; that quite decides it.

MAN. Then you don't wish it to be insured?

MRS. ALV. No, we will give up the idea.

MAN. [*leaning back in his chair*]. But suppose, now, that some accident happened?—one can never tell—would you be prepared to make good the dam- age?

MRS. ALV. No; I tell you quite plainly I would not do so under any circumstances.

MAN. Still, you know, Mrs. Alving —after all, it is a serious responsibil- ity that we are taking upon ourselves.

MRS. ALV. But do you think we can do otherwise?

MAN. No, that's just it. We really can't do otherwise. We ought not to expose ourselves to a mistaken judgment; and we have no right to do anything that will scandalise the community.

MRS. ALV. You ought not to, as a clergyman, at any rate.

MAN. And, what is more, I certainly think that we may count upon our enterprise being attended by good fortune—indeed, that it will be under a special protection.

MRS. ALV. Let us hope so, Mr. Manders.

MAN. Then we will leave it alone?

MRS. ALV. Certainly.

MAN. Very good. As you wish. [*Makes a note.*] No insurance, then.

MRS. ALV. It's a funny thing that you should just have happened to speak about that to-day—

MAN. I have often meant to ask you about it—

MRS. ALV. —because yesterday we very nearly had a fire up there.

MAN. Do you mean it!

MRS. ALV. Oh, as a matter of fact it was nothing of any consequence. Some shavings in the carpenter's shop caught fire.

MAN. Where Engstrand works?

MRS. ALV. Yes. They say he is often so careless with matches.

MAN. He has so many things on his mind, poor fellow—so many anxieties. Heaven be thanked, I am told he is really making an effort to live a blameless life.

MRS. ALV. Really? Who told you so?

MAN. He assured me himself that it is so. He's a good workman, too.

MRS. ALV. Oh, yes, when he is sober.

MAN. Ah, that sad weakness of his! But the pain in his poor leg often drives him to it, he tells me. The last time he was in town, I was really quite touched by him. He came to my house and thanked me so gratefully for getting him work here, where he could have the chance of being with Regina.

MRS. ALV. He doesn't see very much of her.

MAN. But he assured me that he saw her every day.

MRS. ALV. Oh well, perhaps he does.

MAN. He feels so strongly that he needs some one who can keep a hold on him when temptations assail him. That is the most winning thing about Jacob Engstrand; he come to one like a helpless child and accuses himself and confesses his frailty. The last time he came and had a talk with me—. Suppose now, Mrs. Alving, that it were really a necessity of his existence to have Regina at home with him again—

MRS. ALV. [*standing up suddenly*] Regina!

MAN. —you ought not to set yourself against him.

MRS. ALV. Indeed, I set myself very definitely against that. And besides, you know Regina is to have a post in the Orphanage.

MAN. But consider, after all he is her father—

MRS. ALV. I know best what sort of a father he has been to her. No, she shall never go to him with my consent.

MAN. [*getting up*]. My dear lady, don't judge so hastily. It is very sad how you misjudge poor Engstrand

ne would really think you were raid—

MRS. ALV. [*more calmly*]. That is ot the question. I have taken Regina to my charge, and in my charge she mains. [*Listens.*] Hush, dear Mr. anders, don't say any more about it. *Her face brightens with pleasure.*] sten! Oswald is coming downstairs. e will only think about him now.

[OSWALD ALVING, *in a light overat, hat in hand and smoking a big eerschaum pipe, comes in by the door the left.*]

OSW. [*standing in the doorway*]. n, I beg your pardon, I thought you ere in the office. [*Comes in.*] Good orning, Mr. Manders.

MAN. [*staring at him*]. Well! It's ost extraordinary—

MRS. ALV. Yes, what do you think him, Mr. Manders?

MAN. I—I—no, can it possibly be ?

OSW. Yes, it really is the prodigal n, Mr. Manders.

MAN. Oh, my dear young friend—

OSW. Well, the son come home, en.

MRS. ALV. Oswald is thinking of the ne when you were so opposed to the ea of his being a painter.

MAN. We are only fallible, and ny steps seem to us hazardous at st, that afterwards—[*grasps his nd*]. Welcome, welcome! Really, dear Oswald—may I still call you wald?

OSW. What else would you think of M me?

n's Thank you. What I mean, OSW. Oswald, is that you must not ould rep t I have any unqualified MAN. Th f the artist's life. I admit that there are many who, even in that career, can keep the inner man free from harm.

OSW. Let us hope so.

MRS. ALV. [*beaming with pleasure*]. I know one who has kept both the inner and the outer man free from harm. Just take a look at him, Mr. Manders.

OSW. [*walks across the room*]. Yes, yes, mother dear, of course.

MAN. Undoubtedly—no one can deny it. And I hear you have begun to make a name for yourself. I have often seen mention of you in the papers—and extremely favourable mention, too. Although, I must admit latterly I have not seen your name so often.

OSW. [*going towards the conservatory*]. I haven't done so much painting just lately.

MRS. ALV. An artist must take a rest sometimes, like other people.

MAN. Of course, of course. At those times the artist is preparing and strengthening himself for a greater effort.

OSW. Yes. Mother, will dinner soon be ready?

MRS. ALV. In half an hour. He has a fine appetite, thank goodness.

MAN. And a liking for tobacco too.

OSW. I found father's pipe in the room upstairs, and—

MAN. Ah, that is what it was!

MRS. ALV. What?

MAN. When Oswald came in at that door with the pipe in his mouth, I thought for the moment it was his father in the flesh.

OSW. Really?

MRS. ALV. How can you say so! Oswald takes after me.

MAN. Yes, but there is an expres-

sion about the corners of his mouth—something about the lips—that reminds me so exactly of Mr. Alving—especially when he smokes.

MRS. ALV. I don't think so at all. To my mind, Oswald has much more of a clergyman's mouth.

MAN. Well, yes—a good many of my colleagues in the church have a similar expression.

MRS. ALV. But put your pipe down, my dear boy. I don't allow any smoking in here.

OSW. [*puts down his pipe*]. All right, I only wanted to try it, because I smoked it once when I was a child.

MRS. ALV. You?

OSW. Yes; it was when I was quite a little chap. And I can remember going upstairs to father's room one evening when he was in very good spirits.

MRS. ALV. Oh, you can't remember anything about those days.

OSW. Yes, I remember plainly that he took me on his knee and let me smoke his pipe. "Smoke, my boy," he said, "have a good smoke, boy!" And I smoked as hard as I could, until I felt I was turning quite pale and the perspiration was standing in great drops on my forehead. Then he laughed—such a hearty laugh—

MAN. It was an extremely odd thing thing to do.

MRS. ALV. Dear Mr. Manders, Oswald only dreamt it.

OSW. No indeed, mother, it was no dream. Because—don't you remember—you came into the room and carried me off to the nursery, where I was sick, and I saw that you were crying. Did father often play such tricks?

MAN. In his young days he was full of fun—

OSW. And, for all that, he did so much with his life—so much that was good and useful, I mean—short as his life was.

MAN. Yes, my dear Oswald Alving, you have inherited the name of a man who undoubtedly was both energetic and worthy. Let us hope it will be a spur to your energies—

OSW. It ought to be, certainly.

MAN. In any case it was nice of you to come home for the day that is to honour his memory.

OSW. I could do no less for my father.

MRS. ALV. And to let me keep him so long here—that's the nicest part of what he has done.

MAN. Yes, I hear you are going to spend the winter at home.

OSW. I am here for an indefinite time, Mr. Manders.—Oh, it's good to be at home again!

MRS. ALV. [*beaming.*] Yes, isn't it?

MAN. [*looking sympathetically at him*]. You went out into the world very young, my dear Oswald.

OSW. I did. Sometimes I wonder if I wasn't too young.

MRS. ALV. Not a bit of it. It is the best thing for an active boy, and especially for an only child. It's a pity when they are kept at home with their parents and get spoilt.

MAN. That is a very debatable question, Mrs. Alving. A child's own home is, and always must be, his proper place.

OSW. There I agree entirely, Mr. Manders.

MAN. Take the case of a very sad son. Oh yes, we can talk of Engstrand.

re him. What has the result been his case? He is six or seven and enty, and has never yet had the op-rtunity of learning what a well-regu-ed home means.

Osw. Excuse me, Mr. Manders, you e quite wrong there.

Man. Indeed? I imagined that your e abroad had practically been spent irely in artistic circles.

Osw. So it has.

Man. And chiefly amongst the unger artists.

Osw. Certainly.

Man. But I imagined that those ntry, as a rule, had not the means essary for family life and the sup-t of a home.

Osw. There are a considerable num-of them who have not the means to rry, Mr. Manders.

Man. That is exactly my point.

Osw. But they can have a home of ir own, all the same; a good many them have. And they are very well-ulated and very comfortable homes,

.

Mrs. Alving, *who has listened to attentively, nods assent, but says hing.*]

Man. Oh, but I am not talking of helor establishments. By a home I an family life—the life a man lives h his wife and children.

Osw. Exactly, or with his children his children's mother.

Man. [*starts and clasps his hands.*] od heavens!

Osw. What is the matter?

Man. Lives with—with—his child-'s mother!

Osw. Well, would you rather he uld repudiate his children's mother?

Man. Then what you are speaking of are those unprincipled conditions known as irregular unions!

Osw. I have never noticed anything particularly unprincipled about these people's lives.

Man. But do you mean to say that it is possible for a man of any sort of bringing up, and a young woman, to reconcile themselves to such a way of living—and to make no secret of it, either?

Osw. What else are they to do? A poor artist, and a poor girl—it costs a good deal to get married. What else are they to do?

Man. What are they to do? Well, Mr. Alving, I will tell you what they ought to do. They ought to keep away from each other from the very beginning—that is what they ought to do!

Osw. That advice wouldn't have much effect upon hot-blooded young folk who are in love.

Mrs. Alv. No, indeed it wouldn't.

Man. [*persistently*]. And to think that the authorities tolerate such things! That they are allowed to go on openly! [*Turns to* Mrs. Alving.] Had I so little reason, then, to be sadly concerned about your son? In circles where open immorality is rampant—where, one may say, it is honoured—

Osw. Let me tell you this, Mr. Manders. I have been a constant Sunday guest at one or two of these "irregular" households—

Man. On Sunday, too!

Osw. Yes, that is the day of leisure. But never have I heard one objectionable word there, still less have I ever seen anything that could be called immoral. No; but do you know when and where I *have* met with immorality in artists' circles?

MAN. No, thank heaven, I don't!

OSW. Well, then, I shall have the pleasure of telling you. I have met with it when some one or other of your model husbands and fathers have come out there to have a bit of a look round on their own account, and have done the artists the honour of looking them up in their humble quarters. Then we had a chance of learning something, I can tell you. These gentlemen were able to instruct us about places and things that we had never so much as dreamt of.

MAN. What? Do you want me to believe that honourable men when they get away from home will—

OSW. Have you never, when these same honourable men come home again, heard them deliver themselves on the subject of the prevalance of immorality abroad?

MAN. Yes, of course, but—

MRS. ALV. I have heard them, too.

OSW. Well, you can take their word for it, unhesitatingly. Some of them are experts in the matter. [*Putting his hands to his head.*] To think that the glorious freedom of the beautiful life over there should be so besmirched!

MRS. ALV. You musn't get too heated, Oswald; you gain nothing by that.

OSW. No, you are quite right, mother. Besides, it isn't good for me. It's because I am so infernally tired, you know. I will go out and take a turn before dinner. I beg your pardon, Mr. Manders. It is impossible for you to realise the feeling; but it takes me that way. [*Goes out by the farther door on the right.*]

MRS. ALV. My poor boy!

MAN. You may well say so. This is what it has brought him to! [MRS. ALVING *looks at him, but does not speak.*] He called himself the prodigal son. It's only too true, alas—only too true! [MRS. ALVING *looks steadily at him.*] And what do you say to all this?

MRS. ALV. I say that Oswald was right in every single word he said.

MAN. Right? Right? To hold such principles as that?

MRS. ALV. In my loneliness here I have come to just the same opinion as he, Mr. Manders. But I have never presumed to venture upon such topics in conversation. Now there is no need, my boy shall speak for me.

MAN. You deserve the deepest pity, Mrs. Alving. It is my duty to say a few earnest word to you. It is no longer your business man and adviser, no longer your old friend and your dead husband's old friend, that stands before you now. It is your priest that stands before you, just as he did once at the most critical moment of your life.

MRS. ALV. And what is it that my priest has to say to me?

MAN. First of all I must stir your memory. The moment is well chosen. To-morrow is the tenth anniversary of your husband's death; to-morrow the memorial to the departed will be unveiled; to-morrow I shall speak to the whole assembly that will be met together. But to-day I want to speak to you alone.

MRS. ALV. Very well, Mr. Manders, speak!

MAN. Have you forgotten that after barely a year of married life you were standing at the very edge of a precipice?—that you forsook your house and home?—that you ran away from

ur husband—yes, Mrs. Alving, ran
ay, ran away—and refused to re-
n to him in spite of his requests and
reaties?

Mrs. Alv. Have you forgotten how
speakably unhappy I was during
t first year?

Man. To crave for happiness in
s world is simply to be possessed by
spirit of revolt. What right have
to happiness? No! we must do our
y, Mrs. Alving. And your duty
s to cleave to the man you had chos-
and to whom you were bound by a
red bond.

Mrs. Alv. You know quite well what
t of a life my husband was living
that time—what excesses he was
lty of.

Man. I know only too well what
nour used to say of him; and I
uld be the last person to approve
is conduct as a young man, suppos-
that rumour spoke the truth. But
s not a wife's part to be her hus-
d's judge. You should have con-
ered it your bounden duty humbly
have borne the cross that a higher
had laid upon you. But, instead
that, you rebelliously cast off your
ss, you deserted the man whose
mbling footsteps you should have
ported, you did what was bound to
peril your good name and reputa-
is, and came very near to imperil-
the reputation of others into the
gain.

Mrs. Alv. Of others? Of one other,
mean.

Man. It was the height of impru-
ce, your seeking refuge with me.

Mrs. Alv. With our priest? With
intimate friend?

Man. All the more on that account.
You should thank God that I possessed the necessary strength of mind—that I was able to turn you from your outrageous intention, and that it was vouchsafed to me to succeed in leading you back into the path of duty and back to your lawful husband.

Mrs. Alv. Yes, Mr. Manders, that certainly was your doing.

Man. I was but the humble instrument of a higher power. And is it not true that my having been able to bring you again under the yoke of duty and obedience sowed the seeds of a rich blessing on all the rest of your life? Did things not turn out as I foretold to you? Did not your husband turn from straying in the wrong path, as a man should? Did he not, after all, live a life of love and good report with you all his days? Did he not become a benefactor to the neighbourhood? Did he not so raise you up to his level, so that by degrees you became his fellow-worker in all his undertakings—and a noble fellow-worker, too, I know, Mrs. Alving; that praise I will give you.—But now I come to the second serious false step in your life.

Mrs. Alv. What do you mean?

Man. Just as once you forsook your duty as a wife, so, since then, you have forsaken your duty as a mother.

Mrs. Alv. Oh—!

Man. You have been overmastered all your life by a disastrous spirit of wilfulness. All your impulses have led you towards what is undisciplined and lawless. You have never been willing to submit to any restraint. Anything in life that has seemed irksome to you, you have thrown aside recklessly and unscrupulously, as if it were a burden that you were free to rid yourself of if

you would. It did not please you to be a wife any longer, and so you left your husband. Your duties as a mother were irksome to you, so you sent your child away among strangers.

MRS. ALV. Yes, that is true; I did that.

MAN. And that is why you have become a stranger to him.

MRS. ALV. No, no, I am not that!

MAN. You are; you must be. And what sort of a son is it that you have got back? Think over it seriously, Mrs. Alving. You erred greviously in your husband's case—you acknowledge as much, by erecting this memorial to him. Now you are bound to acknowledge how much you have erred in your son's case; possibly there may still be time to reclaim him from the paths of wickedness. Turn over a new leaf, and set yourself to reform what there may still be that is capable of reformation in him. Because [*with uplifted forefinger*] in very truth, Mrs. Alving, you are a guilty mother!—That is what I have thought it my duty to say to you.

[*A short silence.*]

MRS. ALV. [*speaking slowly and with self-control*]. You have had your say, Mr. Manders, and to-morrow you will be making a public speech in memory of my husband. I shall not speak to-morrow. But now I wish to speak to you for a little, just as you have been speaking to me.

MAN. By all means; no doubt you wish to bring forward some excuses for your behaviour—

MRS. ALV. No. I only want to tell you something.

MAN. Well?

MRS. ALV. In all that you said just now about me and my husband, and about our life together after you had, as you put it, led me back into the path of duty—there was nothing that you knew at first hand. From that moment you never again set foot in our house—you, who had been our daily companion before that.

MAN. Remember that you and your husband moved out of town immediately afterwards.

MRS. ALV. Yes, and you never once came out here to see us in my husband's lifetime. It was only the business in connection with the Orphanage that obliged you to come and see me.

MAN. [*in a low and uncertain voice*]. Helen—if that is a reproach, I can only beg you to consider—

MRS. ALV. —the respect you owed to your calling?—yes. All the more as I was a wife who had tried to run away from her husband. One can never be too careful to have nothing to do with such reckless women.

MAN. My dear—Mrs. Alving, you are exaggerating dreadfully—

MRS. ALV. Yes, yes,—very well. What I mean is this, that when you condemn my conduct as a wife you have nothing more to go upon than ordinary public opinion.

MAN. I admit it. What then?

MRS. ALV. Well—now, Mr. Manders, now I am going to tell you the truth. I had sworn to myself that you should know it one day—you, and you only!

MAN. And what may the truth be?

MRS. ALV. The truth is this, that my husband died just as great a profligate as he had been all his life.

MAN. [*feeling for a chair*]. What are you saying?

MRS. ALV. After nineteen years of

rried life, just as profligate—in his sires at all events—as he was before u married us.

MAN. And can you talk of his youthl indiscretions—his irregularities—excesses, if you like—as a proflite life!

MRS. ALV. That was what the doc- who attended him called it.

MAN. I don't understand what you an.

MRS. ALV. It is not necessary you uld.

MAN. It makes my brain reel. To nk that your marriage—all the rs of wedded life you spent with ir husband—were nothing but a hid- abyss of misery.

MRS. ALV. That and nothing else. w you know.

MAN. This—this bewilders me. I 't understand it! I can't grasp it! w in the world was it possible—? w could such a state of things re- in concealed?

MRS. ALV. That was just what I to fight for incessantly, day after . When Oswald was born, I thought aw a slight improvement. But it n't last long. And after that I had ight doubly hard—fight a desperate t so that no one should know what of a man my child's father was. know quite well what an attrac- manner he had; it seemed as if ple could believe nothing but good him. He was one of those men se mode of life seems to have no ct upon their reputations. But at , Mr. Manders—you must hear this —at last something happened more minable than everything else.

AN. More abominable than what have told me!

MRS. ALV. I had borne with it all, though I knew only too well what he indulged in in secret, when he was out of the house. But when it came to the point of scandal coming within our four walls—

MAN. Can you mean it! Here?

MRS. ALV. Yes, here, in our own home. It was in there [*pointing to the nearer door on the right*] in the dining-room that I got the first hint of it. I had something to do in there and the door was standing ajar. I heard our maid come up from the garden with water for the flowers in the conservatory.

MAN. Well—?

MRS. ALV. Shortly afterwards I heard my husband come in too. I heard him say something to her in a low voice. And then I heard—[*with a short laugh*]—oh, it rings in my ears still, with its mixture of what was heartbreaking and what was so ridiculous—I heard my own servant whisper: "Let me go, Mr. Alving! Let me be!"

MAN. What unseemly levity on his part! But surely nothing more than levity, Mrs. Alving, believe me.

MRS. ALV. I soon knew what to believe. My husband had his will of the girl—and that intimacy had consequences, Mr. Manders.

MAN. [*as if turned to stone*]. And all that in this house! In this house!

MRS. ALV. I have suffered a good deal in this house. To keep him at home in the evening—and at night—I have had to play the part of boon companion in his secret drinking-bouts in his room up there. I have had to sit there alone with him, have had to hob-nob and drink with him, have had to

listen to his ribald senseless talk, have had to fight with brute force to get him to bed—

MAN. [*trembling*]. And you were able to endure all this!

MR. ALV. I had my little boy, and endured it for his sake. But when the crowning insult came—when my own servant—then I made up my mind that there should be an end of it. I took the upper hand in the house, absolutely—both with him and all the others. I had a weapon to use against him, you see; he didn't dare to speak. It was then that Oswald was sent away. He was about seven then, and was beginning to notice things and ask questions as children will. I could endure all that, my friend. It seemed to me that the child would be poisoned if he breathed the air of this polluted house. That was why I sent him away. And now you understand, too, why he never set foot here as long as his father was alive. No one knows what it meant to me.

MAN. You have indeed had a pitiable experience.

MRS. ALV. I could never have gone through with it, if I had not had my work. Indeed, I can boast that I have worked. All the increase in the value of the property, all the improvements, all the useful arrangements that my husband got the honour and glory of—do you suppose that he troubled himself about any of them? He, who used to lie the whole day on the sofa reading old Official Lists! No, you may as well know that too. It was I that kept him up to the mark when he had his lucid intervals; it was I that had to bear the whole burden of it when he began his excesses again or took to whining about his miserable condition.

MAN. And this is the man you are building a memorial to!

MRS. ALV. There you see the power of an uneasy conscience.

MAN. An uneasy conscience? What do you mean?

MRS. ALV. I had always before me the fear that it was impossible that the truth should not come out and be believed. That is why the Orphanage is to exist, to silence all rumours and clear away all doubt.

MAN. You certainly have not fallen short of the mark in that, Mrs. Alving.

MRS. ALV. I had another very good reason. I did not wish Oswald, my own son, to inherit a penny that belonged to his father.

MAN. Then it is with Mr. Alving's property—

MRS. ALV. Yes. The sums of money that, year after year, I have given towards this Orphanage, make up the amount of property—I have reckoned it carefully—which in the old days made Lieutenant Alving a catch.

MAN. I understand.

MRS. ALV. That was my purchase money. I don't wish it to pass into Oswald's hands. My son shall have everything from me, I am determined.

[OSWALD *comes in by the farther door on the right. He has left his hat and coat outside.*]

MRS. ALV. Back again, my own dear boy?

OSW. Yes, what can one do outside in this everlasting rain? I hear dinner is nearly ready. That's good!

[REGINA *comes in from the dining room, carrying a parcel.*]

REG. This parcel has come for you ma'am. [*Gives it to her.*]

MRS. ALV. [*glancing at* MANDERS]. e ode to be sung to-morrow, I ex- t.

MAN. Hm—!

REG. And dinner is ready.

MRS. ALV. Good. We will come in moment. I will just—[*begins to n the parcel*].

REG. [*to* OSWALD]. Will you drink ite or red wine, sir?

OSW. Both, Miss Engstrand.

REG. *Bien*—very good, Mr. Alving. *es into the dining-room.*]

OSW. I may as well help you to ork it—. [*Follows her into the ing-room, leaving the door ajar er him.*]

MRS. ALV. Yes, I thought so. Here he ode, Mr. Manders.

MAN. [*clasping his hands*]. How ll I ever have the courage to-mor- to speak the address that—

MRS. ALV. Oh, you will get through

MAN. [*in a low voice, fearing to be rd in the dining-room*]. Yes, we st raise no suspicions.

MRS. ALV. [*quietly but firmly*]. No; then this long dreadful comedy be at an end. After to-morrow, I ll feel as if my dead husband had er lived in this house. There will no one else here then but my boy his mother.

From the dining-room is heard the e of a chair falling; then REGINA'S *e is heard in a loud whisper*: Os- d! Are you mad? Let me go!

MRS. ALV. [*starting in horror*]. —!

She stares wildly at the half-open r. OSWALD *is heard coughing and ming, then the sound of a bottle g uncorked.*]

MAN. [*in an agitated manner*]. What's the matter? What is it, Mrs. Alving?

MRS. ALV. [*hoarsely*]. Ghosts. The couple in the conservatory—over again.

MAN. What are you saying! Regina —? Is she—?

MRS. ALV. Yes. Come. Not a word—!

[*Grips* MANDERS *by the arm and walks unsteadily with him into the dining-room.*]

ACT II

The same scene. The landscape is still obscured by mist. MANDERS *and* MRS. ALVING *come in from the dining-room.*

MRS. ALV. [*calls into the dining-room from the door-way*]. Aren't you coming in here, Oswald?

OSW. No, thanks; I think I will go out for a bit.

MRS. ALV. Yes, do; the weather is clearing a little. [*She shuts the dining-room door, then goes to the hall door and calls.*] Regina!

REG. [*from without*]. Yes, ma'am?

MRS. ALV. Go down into the laundry and help with the garlands.

REG. Yes, ma'am.

[MRS. ALVING *satisfies herself that she has gone, then shuts the door.*]

MAN. I suppose he can't hear us?

MRS. ALV. Not when the door is shut. Besides, he is going out.

MAN. I am still quite bewildered. I don't know how I managed to swallow a mouthful of your excellent dinner.

MRS. ALV. [*walking up and down, and trying to control her agitation.*] Nor I. But what are we to do?

MAN. Yes, what are we to do? Upon my word I don't know; I am so com-

pletely unaccustomed to things of this kind.

MRS. ALV. I am convinced that nothing serious has happened yet.

MAN. Heaven forbid! But it is most unseemly behaviour, for all that.

MRS. ALV. It is nothing more than a foolish jest of Oswald's you may be sure.

MAN. Well, of course, as I said, I am quite inexperienced in such matters; but it certainly seems to me—

MRS. ALV. Out of the house she shall go—and at once. That part of it is as clear as daylight—

MAN. Yes. That is quite clear.

MRS. ALV. But where is she to go? We should not be justified in—

MAN. Where to? Home to her father, of course.

MRS. ALV. To whom, did you say?

MAN. To her—. No, of course Engstrand isn't—. But, great heavens, Mrs. Alving, how is such a thing possible? You surely may have been mistaken, in spite of everything.

MRS. ALV. There was no chance of mistake, more's the pity. Joanna was obliged to confess it to me—and my husband couldn't deny it. So there was nothing else to do but to hush it up.

MAN. No, that was the only thing to do.

MRS. ALV. The girl was sent away at once, and was given a tolerably liberal sum to hold her tongue. She looked after the rest herself when she got to town. She renewed an old acquaintance with the carpenter Engstrand; gave him a hint, I suppose, of how much money she had got, and told him some fairy tale about a foreigner who had been here in his yacht in the summer. So she and Engstrand were married in a great hurry. Why, you married them yourself!

MAN. I can't understand it—. I remember clearly Engstrand's coming to arrange about the marriage. He was full of contrition, and accused himself bitterly for the light conduct he and his fiancée had been guilty of.

MRS. ALV. Of course he had to take the blame on himself.

MAN. But the deceitfulness of it! And with me, too! I positively would not have believed it of Jacob Engstrand. I shall most certainly give him a serious talking to.—And the immorality of such a marriage. Simply for the sake of the money—! What sum was it that the girl had?

MRS. ALV. It was seventy pounds.

MAN. Just think of it—for a paltry seventy pounds to let yourself be bound in marriage to a fallen woman!

MRS. ALV. What about myself, then? —I let myself be bound in marriage to a fallen man.

MAN. Heaven forgive you! what are you saying? A fallen man?

MRS. ALV. Do you suppose my husband was any purer, when I went with him to the altar, than Joanna was when Engstrand agreed to marry her?

MAN. The two cases are as different as day from night—

MRS. ALV. Not so very different, after all. It is true there was a great difference in the price paid, between a paltry seventy pounds and a whole fortune.

MAN. How can you compare such totally different things! I presume you consulted your own heart—and your relations.

MRS. ALV. [*looking away from him*]. thought you understood where what u call my heart had strayed to at at time.

MAN. [*in a constrained voice*]. If had understood anything of the kind, would not have been a daily guest your husband's house.

MRS. ALV. Well, at any rate this ich is certain, that I didn't consult rself in the matter at all.

MAN. Still you consulted those arest to you, as was only right—ur mother, your two aunts.

MRS. ALV. Yes, that is true. The ee of them settled the whole matter r me. It seems incredible to me now, w clearly they made out that it uld be sheer folly to reject such an er. If my mother could only see at all that fine prospect has led to!

MAN. No one can be responsible for result of it. Anyway, there is this be said, that the match was made complete conformity with law and der.

MRS. ALV. [*going to the window*]. , law and order! I often think it is at that is at the bottom of all the sery in the world.

MAN. Mrs. Alving, it is very wicked you to say that.

MRS. ALV. That may be so; but I n't attach importance to those obli-ions and considerations any longer. cannot! I must struggle for my edom.

MAN. What do you mean?

MRS. ALV. [*tapping on the window nes*]. I ought never to have con-led what sort of a life my husband . But I had not the courage to do erwise then—for my own sake, ner. I was too much of a coward.

MAN. A coward?

MRS. ALV. If others had known anything of what happened, they would have said: "Poor man, it is natural enough that he should go astray, when he has a wife that has run away from him."

MAN. They would have had a certain amount of justification for saying so.

MRS. ALV. [*looking fixedly at him*]. If I had been the woman I ought, I would have taken Oswald into my confidence and said to him: "Listen, my son, your father was a dissolute man"—

MAN. Miserable woman—

MRS. ALV. —and I would have told him all I have told you, from beginning to end.

MAN. I am shocked at you, Mrs. Alving.

MRS. ALV. I know. I know quite well! I am shocked at myself when I think of it. [*Comes away from the window.*] I am coward enough for that.

MAN. Can you call it cowardice that you simply did your duty! Have you forgotten that a child should love and honour his father and mother?

MRS. ALV. Don't let us talk in such general terms. Suppose we say: "Ought Oswald to love and honour Mr. Alving?"

MAN. You are a mother—isn't there a voice in your heart that forbids you to shatter your son's ideals?

MRS. ALV. And what about the truth?

MAN. What about his ideals?

MRS. ALV. Oh—ideals, ideals— If only I were not such a coward as I am!

MAN. Do not spurn ideals, Mrs.

Alving—they have a way of avenging themselves cruelly. Take Oswald's own case, now. He hasn't many ideals, more's the pity. But this much I have seen, that his father is something of an ideal to him.

MRS. ALV. You are right there.

MAN. And his conception of his father is what you inspired and encouraged by your letters.

MRS. ALV. Yes, I was swayed by duty and consideration for others; that was why I lied to my son, year in and year out. Oh, what a coward—what a coward I have been!

MAN. You have built up a happy illusion in your son's mind, Mrs. Alving—and that is a thing you certainly ought not to undervalue.

MRS. ALV. Ah, who knows if that is such a desirable thing after all!—But anyway I don't intend to put up with any goings on with Regina. I am not going to let him get the poor girl into trouble.

MAN. Good heavens, no—that would be a frightful thing!

MRS. ALV. If only I knew whether he meant it seriously, and whether it would mean happiness for him—

MAN. In what way? I don't understand.

MRS. ALV. But that is impossible; Regina is not equal to it, unfortunately.

MAN. I don't understand. What do you mean?

MRS. ALV. If I were not such a miserable coward, I would say to him: "Marry her, or make any arrangement you like with her—only let there be no deceit in the matter."

MAN. Heaven forgive you! Are you actually suggesting anything so abominable, so unheard of, as a marriage between them!

MRS. ALV. Unheard of, do you call it? Tell me honestly, Mr. Manders, don't you suppose there are plenty of married couples out here in the country that are just as nearly related as they are?

MAN. I am sure I don't understand you.

MRS. ALV. Indeed you do.

MAN. I suppose you are thinking of cases where possibly—. It is only too true, unfortunately, that family life is not always as stainless as it should be. But as for the sort of thing you hint at—well, it's impossible to tell, at all events with any certainty. Here, on the other hand—for you, a mother, to be willing to allow your—

MRS. ALV. But I am not willing to allow it. I would not allow it for anything in the world; that is just what I was saying.

MAN. No, because you are a coward as you put it. But, supposing you were not a coward—! Great heavens—such a revolting union!

MRS. ALV. Well, for the matter of that, we are all descended from a union of that description, so we are told. And who was it that was responsible for this state of things, Mr. Manders?

MAN. I can't discuss such questions with you, Mrs. Alving; you are by no means in the right frame of mind for that. But for you to dare to say that it is cowardly of you—!

MRS. ALV. I will tell you what I mean by that. I am frightened and timid, because I am obsessed by the presence of ghosts that I never can get rid of.

MAN. The presence of what?

MRS. ALV. Ghosts. When I heard gina and Oswald in there, it was just e seeing ghosts before my eyes. I half inclined to think we are all osts, Mr. Manders. It is not only at we have inherited from our thers and mothers that exists again us, but all sorts of old dead ideas d all kinds of old dead beliefs and ngs of that kind. They are not ac-lly alive in us; but there they are rmant, all the same, and we can ver be rid of them. Whenever I ke up a newspaper and read it, I ney I see ghosts creeping between lines. There must be ghosts all r the world. They must be as count-s as the grains of the sands, it seems me. And we are so miserably afraid the light, all of us.

MAN. Ah!—there we have the out-me of your reading. Fine fruit it borne—this abominable, subversive, e-thinking literature!

MRS. ALV. You are wrong there, my end. You are the one who made me gin to think; and I owe you my best nks for it.

MAN. I!

MRS. ALV. Yes, by forcing me to mit to what you called my duty and obligations; by praising as right just what my whole soul revolted inst, as it would against something minable. That was what led me to mine your teachings critically. I y wanted to unravel one point in m; but as soon as I had got that avelled, the whole fabric came to ces. And then I realised that it was y machine-made.

MAN. [*softly, and with emotion*]. Is t all I accomplished by the hardest ggle of my life?

MRS. ALV. Call it rather the most ignominous defeat of your life.

MAN. It was the greatest victory of my life, Helen; victory over myself.

MRS. ALV. It was a wrong done to both of us.

MAN. A wrong?—wrong for me to entreat you as a wife to go back to your lawful husband, when you came to me half distracted and crying: "Here I am, take me!" Was that a wrong?

MRS. ALV. I think it was.

MAN. We two do not understand one another.

MRS. ALV. Not now, at all events.

MAN. Never—even in my most secret thoughts—have I for a moment regarded you as anything but the wife of another.

MRS. ALV. Do you believe what you say?

MAN. Helen—!

MRS. ALV. One so easily forgets one's own feelings.

MAN. Not I. I am the same as I always was.

MRS. ALV. Yes, yes—don't let us talk any more about the old days. You are buried up to your eyes now in committees and all sorts of business; and I am here, fighting with ghosts both without and within me.

MAN. I can at all events help you to get the better of those without you. After all that I have been horrified to hear from you to-day, I cannot conscientiously allow a young defenceless girl to remain in your house.

MRS. ALV. Don't you think it would be best if we could get her settled?—by some suitable marriage, I mean.

MAN. Undoubtedly. I think, in any case, it would have been desirable for her. Regina is at an age now that—

well, I don't know much about these things, but—

MRS. ALV. Regina developed very early.

MAN. Yes, didn't she. I fancy I remember thinking she was remarkably well developed, bodily, at the time I prepared her for Confirmation. But, for the time being, she must in any case go home. Under her father's care—no, but of course Engstrand is not.—To think that he, of all men, could so conceal the truth from me!

[*A knock is heard at the hall door.*]

MRS. ALV. Who can that be? Come in!

[ENGSTRAND, *dressed in his Sunday clothes, appears in the doorway.*]

ENG. I humbly beg pardon, but—

MAN. Aha! Hm!—

MRS. ALV. Oh, it's you, Engstrand!

ENG. There were none of the maids about, so I took the great liberty of knocking.

MRS. ALV. That's all right. Come in. Do you want to speak to me?

ENG. [*coming in*]. No, thank you very much, ma'am. It was Mr. Manders I wanted to speak to for a moment.

MAN. [*walking up and down*]. Hm!—do you. You want to speak to me, do you?

ENG. Yes, sir, I wanted so very much to—

MAN. [*stopping in front of him*]. Well, may I ask what it is you want?

ENG. It's this way, Mr. Manders. We are being paid off now. And many thanks to you, Mrs. Alving. And now the work is quite finished, I thought it would be so nice and suitable if all of us, who have worked so honestly together all this time, were to finish up with a few prayers this evening.

MAN. Prayers? Up at the Orphanage?

ENG. Yes, sir, but if it isn't agreeable to you, then—

MAN. Oh, certainly—but—hm!—

ENG. I have made a practice of saying a few prayers there myself each evening—

MRS. ALV. Have you?

ENG. Yes, ma'am, now and then—just as a little edification, so to speak. But I am only a poor common man and haven't rightly the gift, alas—and so I thought that as Mr. Manders happened to be here, perhaps—

MAN. Look here, Engstrand. First of all I must ask you a question. Are you in a proper frame of mind for such a thing? Is your conscience free and untroubled?

ENG. Heaven have mercy on me a sinner! My conscience isn't worth our speaking about, Mr. Manders.

MAN. But it is just what we must speak about. What do you say to my question?

ENG. My conscience? Well—it's un easy sometimes, of course.

MAN. Ah, you admit that at all events. Now will you tell me, without any concealment—what is your relationship to Regina?

MRS. ALV. [*hastily*]. Mr. Manders!

MAN. [*calming her*].—Leave it to me!

ENG. With Regina? Good Lord how you frightened me! [*Looks at* MRS. ALVING]. There is nothing wrong with Regina, is there?

MAN. Let us hope not. What I want to know is, what is your relationship to her? You pass as her father, don't you?

ENG. [*unsteadily*]. Well—hm!—you ow, sir, what happened between me d my poor Joanna.

MAN. No more distortion of the ıth! Your late wife made a full ıfession to Mrs. Alving, before she t her service.

ENG. What!—do you mean to say ? Did she do that after all?

MAN. You see it has all come out, gstrand.

ENG. Do you mean to say that she, o gave me her promise and solemn h—

MAN. Did she take an oath?

ENG. Well, no—she only gave me word, but as seriously as a woman ld.

MAN. And all these years you have n hiding the truth from me—from who have had such complete and olute faith in you.

ENG. I am sorry to say I have, sir.

MAN. Did I deserve that from you, gstrand? Haven't I been always dy to help you in word and deed as as lay in my power? Answer me! t not so?

ENG. Indeed there's many a time I uld have been very badly off with- you, sir.

MAN. And this is the way you re- me—by causing me to make false ries in the church registers, and erwards keeping back from me for rs the information which you owed oth to me and to your sense of the h to divulge. Your conduct has ı absolutely inexcusable, Engstrand, from to-day everything is at end veen us.

NG. [*with a sigh*]. Yes, I can see 's what it means.

MAN. Yes, because how can you possibly justify what you did?

ENG. Was the poor girl to go and increase her load of shame by talking about it? Just suppose, sir, for a moment that your reverence was in the same predicament as my poor Joanna —

MAN. I!

ENG. Good Lord, sir, I don't mean the same predicament. I mean, suppose there were something your reverence were ashamed of in the eyes of the world, so to speak. We men oughtn't to judge a poor woman too hardly, Mr. Manders.

MAN. But I am not doing so at all. It is you I am blaming.

ENG. Will your reverence grant me leave to ask you a small question?

MAN. Ask away.

ENG. Shouldn't you say it was right for a man to raise up the fallen?

MAN. Of course it is.

ENG. And isn't a man bound to keep his word of honour?

MAN. Certainly he is; but—

ENG. At the time when Joanna had her misfortune with this Englishman—or maybe he was an American or a Russian, as they call 'em—well, sir, then she came to town. Poor thing, she had refused me once or twice before; she only had eyes for good-looking men in those days, and I had this crooked leg then. Your reverence will remember how I had ventured up into a dancing-saloon where seafaring men were revelling in drunkenness and intoxication, as they say. And when I tried to exhort them to turn from their evil ways—

MRS. ALV. [*coughs from the window*]. Ahem!

MAN. I know, Engstrand, I know—the rough brutes threw you downstairs. You have told me about that incident before. The affliction to your leg is a credit to you.

ENG. I don't want to claim credit for it, your reverence. But what I wanted to tell you was that she came then and confided in me with tears and gnashing of teeth. I can tell you, sir, it went to my heart to hear her.

MAN. Did it, indeed, Engstrand? Well, what then?

ENG. Well, then I said to her: "The American is roaming about on the high seas, he is. And you, Joanna," I said, "you have committed a sin and are a fallen woman. But here stands Jacob Engstrand," I said, "on two strong legs"—of course that was only speaking in a kind of metaphor, as it were, your reverence.

MAN. I quite understand. Go on.

ENG. Well, sir, that was how I rescued her and made her my lawful wife, so that no one should know how recklessly she had carried on with the stranger.

MAN. That was all very kindly done. The only thing I cannot justify was your bringing yourself to accept the money—

ENG. Money? I? Not a farthing.

MAN. [*to* MRS. ALVING, *in a questioning tone.*] But—

ENG. Ah, yes!—wait a bit; I remember now. Joanna did have a trifle of money, you are quite right. But I didn't want to know anything about that. "Fie," I said, "on the mammon of unrighteousness, it's the price of your sin; as for this tainted gold"—or notes, or whatever it was—"we will throw it back in the American's face," I said. But he had gone away and dis appeared on the stormy seas, your rev erence.

MAN. Was that how it was, my goo fellow?

ENG. It was, sir. So then Joann and I decided that the money shoul go towards the child's bringing-u and that's what became of it; and I ca give a faithful account of every sing penny of it.

MAN. This alters the complexion the affair very considerably.

ENG. That's how it was, your reve ence. And I make bold to say that have been a good father to Regina—as far as was in my power—for I a a poor erring mortal, alas!

MAN. There, there, my dear En strand—

ENG. Yes, I do make bold to s that I brought up the child, and ma my poor Joanna a loving and caref husband, as the Bible says we ough But it never occurred to me to go your reverence and claim credit for or boast about it because I had do one good deed in this world. N when Jacob Engstrand does a thi like that, he holds his tongue about Unfortunately it doesn't often happe I know that only too well. And whe ever I do come to see your reveren I never seem to have anything b trouble and wickedness to talk abo Because, as I said just now—and I s it again—conscience can be very ha on us sometimes.

MAN. Give me your hand, Jac Engstrand.

ENG. Oh, sir, I don't like—

MAN. No nonsense. [*Grasps hand.*] That's it!

ENG. And may I make bold humbly beg your reverence's pardon—

MAN. You? On the contrary it is me to beg your pardon—

ENG. Oh no, sir.

MAN. Yes, certainly it is, and I do with my whole heart. Forgive me having so much misjudged you. d I assure you that if I can do anyng for you to prove my sincere re-t and my goodwill towards you—

ENG. Do you mean it, sir?

MAN. It would give me the greatest asure.

ENG. As a matter of fact, sir, you ld do it now. I am thinking of using honest money I have put away out my wages up here, in establishing ort of Sailors' Home in the town.

MRS. ALV. You?

ENG. Yes, to be a sort of Refuge, it were. There are such manifold ptations lying in wait for sailor n when they are roaming about on re. But my idea is that in this se of mine they should have a sort parental care looking after them.

MAN. What do you say to that, s. Alving!

ENG. I haven't much to begin such work with, I know; but Heaven ht prosper it, and if I found any ping hand stretched out to me, n—

MAN. Quite so; we will talk over matter further. Your project atts me enormously. But in the ntime go back to the Orphanage put everything tidy and light the ts, so that the occasion may seem tle solemn. And then we will spend ttle edifying time together, my dear strand, for now I am sure you are suitable frame of mind.

ENG. I believe I am, sir, truly. Good-bye, then, Mrs. Alving, and thank you for all your kindness; and take good care of Regina for me. [*Wipes a tear from his eye.*] Poor Joanna's child—it is an extraordinary thing, but she seems to have grown into my life and to hold me by the heartstrings. That's how I feel about it, truly. [*Bows, and goes out.*]

MAN. Now then, what do you think of him, Mrs. Alving! That was quite another explanation that he gave us.

MRS. ALV. It was, indeed.

MAN. There, you see how exceedingly careful we ought to be in condemning our fellow-men. But at the same time it gives one genuine pleasure to find that one was mistaken. Don't you think so?

MRS. ALV. What I think is that you are, and always will remain, a big baby, Mr. Manders.

MAN. I?

MRS. ALV. [*laying her hands on his shoulders*]. And I think that I should like very much to give you a good hug

MAN. [*drawing back hastily*]. No, no, good gracious! What an idea!

MRS. ALV. [*with a smile*]. Oh, you needn't be afraid of me.

MAN. [*standing by the table.*] You choose such an extravagant way of expressing yourself sometimes. Now I must get these papers together and put them in my bag. [*Does so.*] That's it. And now good-bye, for the present. Keep your eyes open when Oswald comes back. I will come back and see you again presently.

[*He takes his hat and goes out by the hall door.* MRS. ALVING *sighs, glances out of the window, puts one or two things tidy in the room and turns*

to go into the dining-room. She stops in the doorway with a stifled cry.]

MRS. ALV. Oswald, are you still sitting at table!

OSW. [*from the dining-room*]. I am only finishing my cigar.

MRS. ALV. I thought you had gone out for a little turn.

OSW. [*from within the room*]. In weather like this? [*A glass is heard clinking.* MRS. ALVING *leaves the door open and sits down with her knitting on the couch by the window.*] Wasn't that Mr. Manders that went out just now?

MRS. ALV. Yes, he has gone over to the Orphanage.

OSW. Oh. [*The clink of a bottle on a glass is heard again.*]

MRS. ALV. [*with an uneasy expression.*] Oswald, dear, you should be careful with that liqueur. It is strong.

OSW. It's a good protective against the damp.

MRS. ALV. Wouldn't you rather come in here?

OSW. You know you don't like smoking in there.

MRS. ALV. You may smoke a cigar in here, certainly.

OSW. All right; I will come in, then. Just one drop more. There! [*Comes in, smoking a cigar, and shuts the door after him. A short silence.*] Where has the parson gone?

MRS. ALV. I told you he had gone over to the Orphanage.

OSW. Oh, so you did.

MRS. ALV. You shouldn't sit so long at table, Oswald.

OSW. [*holding his cigar behind his back.*] But it's so nice and cosy, mother dear. [*Caresses her with one hand.*] Think what it means to me—to have come home; to sit at my mother's own table, in my mother's own room, and to enjoy the charming meals she gives me.

MRS. ALV. My dear, dear boy!

OSW. [*a little impatiently, as he walks up and down smoking.*] And what else is there for me to do here? I have no occupation—

MRS. ALV. No occupation?

OSW. Not in this ghastly weather, when there isn't a blink of sunshine all day long. [*Walks up and down the floor.*] Not to be able to work, it's—

MRS. ALV. I don't believe you were wise to come home.

OSW. Yes, mother; I had to.

MRS. ALV. Because I would ten times rather give up the happiness of having you with me, sooner than that you should—

OSW. [*standing still by the table.*] Tell, me mother—is it really such a great happiness for you to have me at home?

MRS. ALV. Can you ask?

OSW. [*crumpling up a newspaper*] I should have thought it would have been pretty much the same to you whether I were here or away.

MRS. ALV. Have you the heart to say that to your mother, Oswald?

OSW. But you have been quite happy living without me so far.

MRS. ALV. Yes, I have lived without you—that is true.

[*A silence. The dusk falls by degrees.* OSWALD *walks restlessly up and down. He has laid aside his cigar.*

OSW. [*stopping beside* MRS. ALVING.] Mother, may I sit on the couch beside you?

MRS. ALV. Of course, my dear boy

Osw. [*sitting down*]. Now I must ll you something, mother.

Mrs. Alv. [*anxiously*]. What?

Osw. [*staring in front of him.*] I n't bear it any longer.

Mrs. Alv. Bear what? What do ou mean?

Osw. [*as before.*] I couldn't bring yself to write to you about it; and nce I have been at home—

Mrs. Alv. [*catching him by the m*]. Oswald, what is it?

Osw. Both yesterday and to-day I ve tried to push my thoughts away om me—to free myself from them. ut I can't.

Mrs. Alv. [*getting up*]. You must eak plainly, Oswald!

Osw. [*drawing her down to her seat ain*]. Sit still, and I will try and l you. I have made a great deal of e fatigue I felt after my journey—

Mrs. Alv. Well, what of that?

Osw. But that isn't what is the atter. It is no ordinary fatigue—

Mrs. Alv. [*trying to get up.*] You e not ill, Oswald!

Osw. [*pulling her down again*]. Sit ll, mother. Do take it quietly. I n not exactly ill—not ill in the usual nse. [*Takes his head in his hands.*] other, it's my mind that has broken wn—gone to pieces—I shall never able to work any more! [*Buries face in his hands and throws him- f at her knees in an outburst of bs.*]

Mrs. Alv. [*pale and trembling.*] wald! Look at me! No, no, it isn't ie!

Osw. [*looking up with a distracted pression*]. Never to be able to work y more! Never—never! A living death! Mother, can you imagine anything so horrible!

Mrs. Alv. My poor unhappy boy! How has this terrible thing happened?

Osw. [*sitting up again.*] That is just what I cannot possibly understand. I have never lived recklessly, in any sense. You must believe that of me, mother! I have never done that.

Mrs. Alv. I haven't a doubt of it, Oswald.

Osw. And yet this comes upon me all the same!—this terrible disaster.

Mrs. Alv. Oh, but it will all come right again, my dear precious boy. It is nothing but overwork. Believe me, that is so.

Osw. [*dully*]. I thought so too, at first; but it isn't so.

Mrs. Alv. Tell me all about it.

Osw. Yes, I will.

Mrs. Alv. When did you first feel anything?

Osw. It was just after I had been home last time and had got back to Paris. I began to feel the most violent pains in my head—mostly at the back, I think. It was as if a tight band of iron was pressing on me from my neck upwards.

Mrs. Alv. And then?

Osw. At first I thought it was nothing but the headaches I always used to be so much troubled with while I was growing.

Mrs. Alv. Yes, yes—

Osw. But it wasn't; I soon saw that. I couldn't work any longer. I would try and start some big new picture; but it seemed as if all my faculties had forsaken me, as if all my strength were paralysed. I couldn't manage to collect my thoughts; my head seemed to swim—everything went

round and round. It was a horrible feeling! At last I sent for a doctor—and from him I learnt the truth.

MRS. ALV. In what way, do you mean?

OSW. He was one of the best doctors there. He made me describe what I felt, and then he began to ask me a whole heap of questions which seemed to me to have nothing to do with the matter. I couldn't see what he was driving at—

MRS. ALV. Well?

OSW. At last he said: "You have had the canker of disease in you practically from your birth"—the actual word he used was *"vermoulu."*

MRS. ALV. [*anxiously*]. What did he mean by that?

OSW. I couldn't understand, either—and I asked him for a clearer explanation. And then the old cynic said [*clenching his fist*]. Oh!—

MRS. ALV. What did he say?

OSW. He said: "The sins of the fathers are visited on the children."

MRS. ALV. [*getting up slowly*]. The sins of the fathers—!

OSW. I nearly struck him in the face—

MRS. ALV. [*walking across the room*]. The sins of the fathers—!

OSW. [*smiling sadly*]. Yes, just imagine! Naturally I assured him that what he thought was impossible. But do you think he paid any heed to me? No, he persisted in his opinion; and it was only when I got out your letters and translated to him all the passages that referred to my father—

MRS. ALV. Well, and then?

OSW. Well, then of course he had to admit that he was on the wrong tack; and then I learnt the truth—the incomprehensible truth! I ought to have had nothing to do with the joyous happy life I had lived with my comrades. It had been too much for my strength. So it was my own fault!

MRS. ALV. No, no, Oswald! Don't believe that!

OSW. There was no other explanation of it possible, he said. That is the most horrible part of it. My whole life incurably ruined—just because of my own imprudence. All that I wanted to do in the world—not to dare to think of it any more—not to be *able* to think of it! Oh! if only I could live my life over again—if only I could undo what I have done! [*Throws himself on his face on the couch.* MRS. ALVING *wrings her hands, and walks up and down silently fighting with herself.*]

OSW. [*looks up after a while, raising himself on his elbows.*] If only it had been something I had inherited—something I could not help. But, instead of that, to have disgracefully, stupidly, thoughtlessly thrown away one's happiness, one's health, everything in the world—one's future, one's life—

MRS. ALV. No, no, my darling boy; that is impossible! [*Bending over him.*] Things are not so desperate as you think.

OSW. Ah, you don't know—. [*Springs up.*] And to think, mother, that I should bring all this sorrow upon you! Many a time I have almost wished and hoped that you really did not care so very much for me.

MRS. ALV. I, Oswald? My only son! All that I have in the world! The only thing I care about!

OSW. [*taking hold of her hands and*

issing them]. Yes, yes, I know that s so. When I am at home I know that s true. And that is one of the hard- st parts of it to me. But now you now all about it; and now we won't alk any more about it to-day. I can't tand thinking about it long at a time. [*Walks across the room.*] Let me have omething to drink, mother.

MRS. ALV. To drink? What do you ant?

OSW. Oh, anything you like. I uppose you have got some punch in he house.

MRS. ALV. Yes, but my dear Os- ald—!

OSW. Don't tell me I mustn't, nother. Do be nice! I must have omething to drown these gnawing houghts. [*Goes into the conserva- ory*]. And how—how gloomy it is ere! [MRS. ALVING *rings the bell.*] nd this incessant rain. It may go on eek after week—a whole month. ever a ray of sunshine. I don't re- ember ever having seen the sun shine nce when I have been at home.

MRS. ALV. Oswald—you are think- g of going away from me!

OSW. Hm!—[*sighs deeply.*] I am ot thinking about anything. I *can't* ink about anything! [*In a low oice.*] I have to let that alone.

REG. [*coming from the dining-room*]. id you ring, ma'am?

MRS. ALV. Yes, let us have the lamp .

REG. In a moment, ma'am; it is all ady lit. [*Goes out.*]

MRS. ALV. [*going up to* OSWALD]. swald, don't keep anything back om me.

OSW. I don't, mother. [*Goes to the table.*] It seems to me I have told you a good lot.

[REGINA *brings the lamp and puts it upon the table.*]

MRS. ALV. Regina, you might bring us a small bottle of champagne.

REG. Yes, ma'am. [*Goes out.*]

OSW. [*taking hold of his mother's face*]. That's right. I knew my mother wouldn't let her son go thirsty.

MRS. ALV. My poor dear boy, how could I refuse you anything now?

OSW. [*eagerly*]. Is that true, mother? Do you mean it?

MRS. ALV. Mean what?

OSW. That you couldn't deny me anything?

MRS. ALV. My dear Oswald—

OSW. Hush!

[REGINA *brings in a tray with a small bottle of champagne and two glasses, which she puts on the table.*]

REG. Shall I open the bottle?

OSW. No, thank you, I will do it.

[REGINA *goes out.*]

MRS. ALV. [*sitting down at the table*]. What did you mean, when you asked if I could refuse you nothing?

OSW. [*busy opening the bottle.*] Let us have a glass first—or two.

[*He draws the cork, fills one glass and is going to fill the other.*]

MRS. ALV. [*holding her hand over the second glass*]. No, thanks—not for me.

OSW. Oh, well, for me then! [*He empties his glass, fills it again and empties it; then sits down at the table.*]

MRS. ALV. [*expectantly*]. Now, tell me.

OSW. [*without looking at her.*] Tell me this; I thought you and Mr. Manders seemed so strange—so quiet—at dinner.

MRS. ALV. Did you notice that?

OSW. Yes. Ahem! [*After a short pause.*] Tell me—What do you think of Regina?

MRS. ALV. What do I think of her?

OSW. Yes, isn't she splendid!

MRS. ALV. Dear Oswald, you don't know her as well as I do—

OSW. What of that?

MRS. ALV. Regina was too long at home, unfortunately. I ought to have taken her under my charge sooner.

OSW. Yes, but isn't she splendid to look at, mother? [*Fills his glass.*]

MRS. ALV. Regina has many serious faults—

OSW. Yes, but what of that? [*Drinks.*]

MRS. ALV. But I am fond of her, all the same; and I have made myself responsible for her. I wouldn't for the world she should come to any harm.

OSW. [*jumping up.*] Mother, Regina is my only hope of salvation!

MRS. ALV. [*getting up.*] What do you mean?

OSW. I can't go on bearing all this agony of mind alone.

MRS. ALV. Haven't you your mother to help you to bear it?

OSW. Yes, I thought so; that was why I came home to you. But it is no use; I see that it isn't. I cannot spend my life here.

MRS. ALV. Oswald!

OSW. I must live a different sort of life, mother; so I shall have to go away from you. I don't want you watching it.

MRS. ALV. My unhappy boy! But, Oswald, as long as you are ill like this—

OSW. If it was only a matter of feeling ill, I would stay with you, mother. You are the best friend I have in the world.

MRS. ALV. Yes, I am that, Oswald, am I not?

OSW. [*walking restlessly about*]. But all this torment—the regret, the remorse—and the deadly fear. Oh—this horrible fear!

MRS. ALV. [*following him*]. Fear? Fear of what? What do you mean?

OSW. Oh, don't ask me any more about it. I don't know what it is. I can't put it into words. [MRS. ALVING *crosses the room and rings the bell.*] What do you want?

MRS. ALV. I want my boy to be happy, that's what I want. He mustn't brood over anything. [*To* REGINA *who has come to the door.*] More champagne—a large bottle.

OSW. Mother!

MRS. ALV. Do you think we country people don't know how to live?

OSW. Isn't she splendid to look at? What a figure! And the picture of health!

MRS. ALV. [*sitting down at the table*]. Sit down, Oswald, and let us have a quiet talk.

OSW. [*sitting down*]. You don't know, mother, that I owe Regina a little reparation.

MRS. ALV. You!

OSW. Oh, it was only a little thoughtlessness—call it what you like. Something quite innocent, anyway. The last time I was home—

MRS. ALV. Yes?

OSW. —she used often to ask me questions about Paris, and I told her one thing and another about the life there. And I remember saying one day: "Wouldn't you like to go there yourself?"

Mrs. Alv. Well?

Osw. I saw her blush, and she said: Yes, I should like to very much." All right," I said, "I daresay it might e managed"—or something of that ort.

Mrs. Alv. And then?

Osw. I naturally had forgotten all bout it; but the day before yesterday happened to ask her if she was glad was to be so long at home—

Mrs. Alv. Well?

Osw. —and she looked so queerly me, and asked: "But what is to be- me of my trip to Paris?"

Mrs. Alv. Her trip!

Osw. And then I got it out of her at she had taken the thing seriously, d had been thinking about me all e time, and had set herself to learn rench—

Mrs. Alv. So that was why—

Osw. Mother—when I saw this fine, lendid, handsome girl standing there front of me—I had never paid any tention to her before then—but now, hen she stood there as if with open ms ready for me to take her to my- f—

Mrs. Alv. Oswald!

Osw. —then I realised that my sal- tion lay in her, for I saw the joy of e in her.

Mrs. Alv. [*starting back.*] The joy life—? Is there salvation in that?

Reg. [*coming in from the dining- om with a bottle of champagne*]. xcuse me for being so long; but I d to go to the cellar. [*Puts the ttle down on the table.*]

Osw. Bring another glass, too.

Reg. [*looking at him in astonish- nt*]. The mistress's glass is there,

Osw. Yes, but fetch one for your- self, Regina. [Regina *starts, and gives a quick shy glance at* Mrs. Alving.] Well?

Reg. [*in a low and hesitating voice.*] Do you wish me to, ma'am?

Mrs. Alv. Fetch the glass, Regina. (Regina *goes into the dining-room.*]

Osw. [*looking after her.*] Have you noticed how well she walks?—so firmly and confidently!

Mrs. Alv. It cannot be, Oswald.

Osw. It is settled! You must see that. It is no use forbidding it. (Regina *comes in with a glass, which she holds in her hand.*] Sit down, Regina. [Regina *looks questioningly at* Mrs. Alving.]

Mrs. Alv. Sit down. [Regina *sits down on a chair near the dining-room door, still holding the glass in her hand.*] Oswald, what was it you were saying about the joy of life?

Osw. Ah, mother—the joy of life! You don't know very much about that at home here. I shall never realise it here.

Mrs. Alv. Not even when you are with me?

Osw. Never at home. But you can't understand that.

Mrs. Alv. Yes, indeed I almost think I do understand you—now.

Osw. That—and the joy of work. They are really the same thing at bottom. But you don't know anything about that either.

Mrs. Alv. Perhaps you are right. Tell me some more about it, Oswald.

Osw. Well, all I mean is that here people are brought up to believe that work is a curse and a punishment for sin, and that life is a state of wretch-

edness and that the sooner we can get out of it the better.

MRS. ALV. A vale of tears, yes. And we quite conscientiously make it so.

OSW. But the people over there will have none of that. There is no one there who really believes doctrines of that kind any longer. Over there the mere fact of being alive is thought to be a matter for exultant happiness. Mother, have you noticed that everything I have painted has turned upon the joy of life?—always upon the joy of life, unfailingly. There is light there, and sunshine, and a holiday feeling—and people's faces beaming with happiness. That is why I am afraid to stay at home here with you.

MRS. ALV. Afraid? What are you afraid of here with me?

OSW. I am afraid that all these feelings that are so strong in me would degenerate into something ugly here.

MRS. ALV. [*looking steadily at him.*] Do you think that is what would happen?

OSW. I am certain it would. Even if one lived the same life at home here, as over there—it would never really be the same life.

MRS. ALV. [*who has listened anxiously to him, gets up with a thoughtful expression and says:*] Now I see clearly how it all happened.

OSW. What do you see?

MRS. ALV. I see it now for the first time. And now I can speak.

OSW. [*getting up*]. Mother, I don't understand you.

REG. [*who has got up also*]. Perhaps I had better go.

MRS. ALV. No, stay here. Now I can speak. Now, my son, you shall know the whole truth. Oswald! Regina!

OSW. Hush!—here is the parson— [MANDERS *comes in by the hall door.*]

MAN. Well, my friends, we have been spending an edifying time over there.

OSW. So have we.

MAN. Engstrand must have help with his Sailors' Home. Regina must go home with him and give him her assistance.

REG. No, thank you, Mr. Manders.

MAN. [*perceiving her for the first time*]. What—? you in here?—and with a wineglass in your hand!

REG. [*putting down the glass hastily*]. I beg your pardon—!

OSW. Regina is going away with me, Mr. Manders.

MAN. Going away! With you!

OSW. Yes, as my wife—if she insists on that.

MAN. But, good heavens—!

REG. It is not my fault, Mr. Manders.

OSW. Or else she stays here if I stay.

REG. [*involuntarily*]. Here!

MAN. I am amazed at you, Mrs. Alving.

MRS. ALV. Neither of those things will happen, for now I can speak openly.

MAN. But you won't do that! No, no, no!

MRS. ALV. Yes, I can and will. And without destroying any one's ideals.

OSW. Mother, what is it that is being concealed from me?

REG. [*listening*]. Mrs. Alving! Listen! They are shouting outside.

[*Goes into the conservatory and looks out.*]

OSW. [*going to the window on the left*]. What can be the matter? Where does that glare come from?

REG. [*calls out*]. The Orphanage is on fire!

MRS. ALV. [*going to the window*]. On fire?

MAN. On fire? Impossible. I was here just a moment ago.

OSW. Where is my hat? Oh, never mind that. Father's Orphanage—! [*Runs out through the garden door.*]

MRS. ALV. My shawl, Regina! The whole place is in flames.

MAN. How terrible! Mrs. Alving, that fire is a judgment on this house of sin!

MRS. ALV. Quite so. Come, Regina. [*She and* REGINA *hurry out.*]

MAN. [*clasping his hands*]. And no insurance!

[*Follows them out.*]

ACT III

The same scene. All the doors are standing open. The lamp is still burning on the table. It is dark outside, except for a faint glimmer of light seen through the windows at the back. MRS. ALVING, *with a shawl over her head, is standing in the conservatory, looking out.* REGINA, *also wrapped in a shawl, is standing a little behind her.*

MRS. ALV. Everything burnt—down to the ground.

REG. It is burning still in in the basement.

MRS. ALV. I can't think why Oswald doesn't come back. There is no chance of saving anything.

REG. Shall I go and take his hat to him?

MRS. ALV. Hasn't he even got his hat?

REG. [*pointing to the hall*]. No, there it is, hanging up.

MRS. ALV. Never mind. He is sure to come back soon. I will go and see what he is doing. [*Goes out by the garden door.* MANDERS *comes in from the hall.*]

MAN. Isn't Mrs. Alving here?

REG. She has just this moment gone down into the garden.

MAN. I have never spent such a terrible night in my life.

REG. Isn't it a shocking misfortune, sir!

MAN. Oh, don't speak about it. I scarcely dare to think about it.

REG. But how can it have happened?

MAN. Don't ask me, Miss Engstrand! How should I know? Are you going to suggest too—? Isn't it enough that your father—?

REG. What has he done?

MAN. He has nearly driven me crazy.

ENG. [*coming in from the hall*]. Mr. Manders—!

MAN. [*turning round with a start*]. Have you even followed me here!

ENG. Yes, God help us all—! Great heavens! What a dreadful thing, your reverence!

MAN. [*walking up and down*]. Oh dear, oh dear!

REG. What do you mean?

ENG. Our little prayer-meeting was the cause of it all, don't you see? [*Aside, to* REGINA.] Now we've got the old fool, my girl. [*Aloud.*] And to think it is my fault that Mr. Manders should be the cause of such a thing!

MAN. I assure you, Engstrand—

ENG. But there was no one else carrying a light there except you, sir.

MAN. [*standing still*]. Yes, so you say. But I have no clear recollection of having had a light in my hand.

ENG. But I saw quite distinctly your reverence take a candle and snuff it with your fingers and throw away the burning bit of wick among the shavings.

MAN. Did you see that?

ENG. Yes, distinctly.

MAN. I can't understand it at all. It is never my habit to snuff a candle with my fingers.

ENG. Yes, it wasn't like you to do that, sir. But who would have thought it could be such a dangerous thing to do?

MAN. [*walking restlessly backwards and forwards*]. Oh, don't ask me!

ENG. [*following him about*]. And you hadn't insured it either, had you, sir?

MAN. No, no, no; you heard me say so.

ENG. You hadn't insured it—and then went and set light to the whole place! Good Lord, what bad luck!

MAN. [*wiping the perspiration from his forehead*]. You may well say so, Engstrand.

ENG. And that it should happen to a charitable institution that would have been of service both to the town and the country, so to speak! The newspapers won't be very kind to your reverence, I expect.

MAN. No, that is just what I am thinking of. It is almost the worst part of the whole thing. The spiteful attacks and accusations—it is horrible to think of!

MRS. ALV. [*coming in from the garden*]. I can't get him away from the fire.

MAN. Oh, there you are, Mrs. Alving.

MRS. ALV. You will escape having to make your inaugural address now, at all events, Mr. Manders.

MAN. Oh, I would so gladly have—

MRS. ALV. [*in a dull voice*]. It is just as well it has happened. This Orphanage would never have come to any good.

MAN. Don't you think so?

MRS. ALV. Do you?

MAN. But it is none the less an extraordinary piece of ill luck.

MRS. ALV. We will discuss it simply as a business matter.—Are you waiting for Mr. Manders, Engstrand?

ENG. [*at the hall door*]. Yes, I am.

MRS. ALV. Sit down then, while you are waiting.

ENG. Thank you, I would rather stand.

MRS. ALV. [*to* MANDERS]. I suppose you are going by the boat?

MAN. Yes. It goes in about an hour.

MRS. ALV. Please take all the documents back with you. I don't want to hear another word about the matter. I have something else to think about now—

MAN. Mrs. Alving—

MRS. ALV. Later on I will send you a power of attorney to deal with it exactly as you please.

MAN. I shall be most happy to undertake that. I am afraid the original intention of the bequest will have to be entirely altered now.

MRS. ALV. Of course.

MAN. Provisionally, I should suggest this way of disposing of it. Make over the Solvik property to the parish. The land is undoubtedly not without a certain value; it will always be useful for some purpose or another. And as for the interest on the remaining

pital that is on deposit in the bank, ssibly I might make suitable use of at in support of some undertaking at promises to be of use to the town.

MRS. ALV. Do exactly as you please. e whole thing is a matter of indif- rence to me now.

ENG. You will think of my Sailors' ome, Mr. Manders?

MAN. Yes, certainly, that is a sug- stion. But we must consider the mat- carefully.

ENG. [*aside*]. Consider!—devil take Oh Lord.

MAN. [*signing*]. And unfortunately an't tell how much longer I may have ything to do with the matter— ether public opinion may not force to retire from it altogether. That ends entirely upon the result of enquiry into the cause of the fire.

MRS. ALV. What do you say?

MAN. And one cannot in any way kon upon the result beforehand.

ENG. [*going nearer to him*]. Yes, eed one can; because here stand I, ob Engstrand.

MAN. Quite so, but—

NG. [*lowering his voice*]. And Jacob gstrand isn't the man to desert a rthy benefactor in the hour of need, the saying is.

MAN. Yes, but, my dear fellow— v—?

ENG. You might say Jacob Eng- and is an angel of salvation, so to ak, your reverence.

MAN. No, no, I couldn't possibly ac- t that.

NG. That's how it will be, all the e. I know some one who has taken blame for some one else on his ulders before now, I do.

MAN. Jacob! [*Grasps his hand.*] You are one in a thousand! You shall have assistance in the matter of your Sailors' Home, you may rely upon that.

[ENGSTRAND *tries to thank him, but is prevented by emotion.*]

MAN. [*hanging his wallet over his shoulder*]. Now we must be off. We will travel together.

ENG. [*by the dining-room door, says aside to* REGINA]. Come with me, you hussy! You shall be as cosy as the yolk in an egg!

REG. [*tossing her head*]. *Merci!*

[*She goes out into the hall and brings back* MANDERS' *luggage.*]

MAN. Good-bye, Mrs. Alving! And may the spirit of order and of what is lawful speedily enter into this house.

MRS. ALV. Good-bye, Mr. Manders.

[*She goes into the conservatory, as she sees* OSWALD *coming in by the garden door.*]

ENG. [*as he and* REGINA *are helping* MANDERS *on with his coat*]. Good-bye, my child. And if anything should happen to you, you know where Jacob Engstrand is to be found. [*Lowering his voice.*] Little Harbour Street, ahem—! [*To* MRS. ALVING *and* OSWALD.] And my house for poor seafaring men shall be called the "Alving Home," it shall. And, if I can carry out my own ideas about it, I shall make bold to hope that it may be worthy of bearing the late Mr. Alving's name.

MAN. [*at the door*]. Ahem—ahem! Come along, my dear Engstrand. Good-bye—good-bye!

[*He and* ENGSTRAND *go out by the hall door.*]

OSW. [*going to the table*]. What house was he speaking about?

MRS. ALV. I believe it is some sort of a Home that he and Mr. Manders want to start.

OSW. It will be burnt up just like this one.

MRS. ALV. What makes you think that?

OSW. Everything will be burnt up; nothing will be left that is in memory of my father. Here am I being burnt up, too.

[REGINA *looks at him in alarm.*]

MRS. ALV. Oswald! You should not have stayed so long over there, my poor boy.

OSW. [*sitting down at the table*]. I almost believe you are right.

MRS. ALV. Let me dry your face, Oswald; you are all wet. [*Wipes his face with her handkerchief.*]

OSW. [*looking straight before him, with no expression in his eyes*]. Thank you, mother.

MRS. ALV. And aren't you tired, Oswald? Don't you want to go to sleep?

OSW. [*uneasily*]. No, no—not to sleep! I never sleep; I only pretend to. [*Gloomily.*] That will come soon enough.

MRS. ALV. [*looking at him anxiously*]. Anyhow you are really ill, my darling boy.

REG. [*intently*]. Is Mr. Alving ill?

OSW. [*impatiently*]. And do shut all the doors! This deadly fear—

MRS. ALV. Shut the doors, Regina. [REGINA *shuts the doors and remains standing by the hall door.* MRS. ALVING *takes off her shawn;* REGINA *does the same.* MRS. ALVING *draws up a chair near to* OSWALD'S *and sits down beside him.*] That's it! Now I will sit beside you—

OSW. Yes, do. And Regina must stay in here too. Regina must always be near me. You must give me a helping hand, you know, Regina. Won't you do that?

REG. I don't understand—

MRS. ALV. A helping hand?

OSW. Yes—when there is need for it.

MRS. ALV. Oswald, have you not your mother to give you a helping hand?

OSW. You? [*Smiles.*] No, mother, you will never give me the kind of helping hand I mean. [*Laughs grimly.*] You! Ha, ha! [*Looks gravely at her.*] After all, you have the best right. [*Impetuously.*] Why don't you call me by my Christian name, Regina? Why don't you say Oswald?

REG. [*in a low voice*]. I did not thing Mrs. Alving would like it.

MRS. ALV. It will not be long before you have the right to do it. Sit down here now beside us, too. [REGINA *sits down quietly and hesitatingly at the other side of the table.*] And now, my poor tortured boy, I am going to take the burden off your mind—

OSW. You, mother?

MRS. ALV. —all that you call remorse and regret and self-reproach.

OSW. And you think you can do that?

MRS. ALV. Yes, now I can, Oswald. A little while ago you were talking about the joy of life, and what you said seemed to shed a new light upon everything in my whole life.

OSW. [*shaking his head*]. I don't in the least understand what you mean.

MRS. ALV. You should have known

ur father in his young days in the my. He was full of the joy of life, can tell you.

Osw. Yes, I know.

Mrs. Alv. It gave me a holiday eling only to look at him, full of repressible energy and exuberant irits.

Osw. What then?

Mrs. Alv. Well, then this boy, full the joy of life—for he was just like oy, then—had to make his home in a cond-rate town which had none of the y of life to offer him, but only dissi-tions. He had to come out here and e an aimless life; he had only an icial post. He had no work worth voting his whole mind to; he had thing more than official routine to end to. He had no a single com-nion capable of appreciating what e joy of life meant; nothing but ers and tipplers—

Osw. Mother—!

Mrs. Alv. And so the inevitable ppened!

Osw. What was the inevitable?

Mrs. Alv. You said yourself this ening what would happen in your se if you stayed at home.

Osw. Do you mean by that, that her—?

Mrs. Alv. Your poor father never ind any outlet for the overmaster-joy of life that was in him. And brought no holiday spirit into his ne, either.

Osw. You didn't, either?

Mrs. Alv. I had been taught about y, and the sort of thing that I be-ved in so long here. Everything med to turn upon duty—my duty, his duty—and I am afraid I made your poor father's home unbearable to him, Oswald.

Osw. Why did you never say anything about it to me in your letters?

Mrs. Alv. I never looked at it as a thing I could speak of to you, who were his son.

Osw. What way did you look at it, then?

Mrs. Alv. I only saw the one fact, that your father was a lost man before ever you were born.

Osw. [*in a choking voice*]. Ah—! [*He gets up and goes to the window.*]

Mrs. Alv. And then I had the one thought in my mind, day and night, that Regina in fact had as good a right in this house—as my own boy had.

Osw. [*turns round suddenly*]. Regina—?

Reg. [*gets up and asks in choking tones*]. I—?

Mrs. Alv. Yes, now you both know it.

Osw. Regina!

Reg. [*to herself*]. So mother was one of that sort too.

Mrs. Alv. Your mother had many good qualities, Regina.

Reg. Yes, but she was one of that sort too, all the same. I have even thought so myself, sometimes, but—. Then, if you please, Mrs. Alving, may I have permission to leave at once?

Mrs. Alv. Do you really wish to, Regina?

Reg. Yes, indeed, I certainly wish to.

Mrs. Alv. Of course you shall do as you like, but—

Osw. [*going up to* Regina]. Leave now? This is your home.

Reg. *Merci,* Mr. Alving—oh, of course I may say Oswald now, but that

is not the way I thought it would become allowable.

MRS. ALV. Regina, I have not been open with you—

REG. No, I can't say you have! If I had known Oswald was ill—. And now that there can never be anything serious between us—. No, I really can't stay here in the country and wear myself out looking after invalids.

OSW. Not ever for the sake of one who has so near a claim on you?

REG. No, indeed I can't. A poor girl must make some use of her youth, otherwise she may easily find herself out in the cold before she knows where she is. And I have got the joy of life in me, too, Mrs. Alving!

MRS. ALV. Yes, unfortunately; but don't throw yourself away, Regina.

REG. Oh, what's going to happen will happen. If Oswald takes after his father, it is just as likely I take after my mother, I expect.—May I ask, Mrs. Alving, whether Mr. Manders knows this about me?

MRS. ALV. Mr. Manders knows everything.

REG. [*putting on her shawl*]. Oh, well then, the best thing I can do is to get away by the boat as soon as I can. Mr. Manders is such a nice gentleman to deal with; and it certainly seems to me that I have just as much right to some of that money as he—as that horrid carpenter.

MRS. ALV. You are quite welcome to it, Regina.

REG. [*looking at her fixedly*]. You might as well have brought me up like a gentleman's daughter; it would have been more suitable. [*Tosses her head.*] Oh, well—never mind! [*With a bitter glance at the unopened bottle.*] I dare say some day I shall be drinking champagne with gentlefolk, after all.

MRS. ALV. If ever you need a home Regina, come to me.

REG. No, thank you, Mrs. Alving Mr. Manders takes an interest in me I know. And if things should go very badly with me, I know one house a any rate where I shall feel at home.

MRS. ALV. Where is that?

REG. In the "Alving Home."

MRS. ALV. Regina—I can see quit well—you are going to your ruin!

REG. Pooh!—good-bye.

[*She bows to them and goes ou through the hall.*]

OSW. [*standing by the window an looking out*]. Has she gone?

MRS. ALV. Yes.

OSW. [*muttering to himself*]. think it's all wrong.

MRS. ALV. [*going up to him fro behind and putting her hands on hi shoulders*]. Oswald, my dear boy— has it been a great shock to you?

OSW. [*turning his face towards her*] All this about father, do you mean?

MRS. ALV. Yes, about your unhapp father. I am so afraid it may hav been too much for you.

OSW. What makes you think that Naturally it has taken me entirely b surprise; but, after all, I don't kno that it matters much to me.

MRS. ALV. [*drawing back her hands*] Doesn't matter!—that your father's lif was such a terrible failure!

OSW. Of course I can feel sympath for him, just as I would for anyon else, but—

MRS. ALV. No more than that! Fo your own father!

Osw. [*impatiently*]. Father—father! never knew anything of my father. don't remember anything else about n except that he once made me sick.

Mrs. Alv. It is dreadful to think —But surely a child should feel ne affection for his father, whatever ppens?

Osw. When the child has nothing to nk his father for? When he has er known him? Do you really cling that antiquated superstition—you, o are so broadminded in other ngs?

Mrs. Alv. You call it nothing but a erstition!

Osw. Yes, and you can see that for rself quite well, mother. It is one hose beliefs that are put into circu- on in the world, and—

Mrs. Alv. Ghosts of beliefs!

Osw. [*walking across the room*]. , you might call them ghosts.

Mrs. Alv. [*with an outburst of feel-*]. Oswald—then you don't love either!

Osw. You I know, at any rate—

Mrs. Alv. You know me, yes; but nat all?

sw. And I know how fond you are ne, and I ought to be grateful to for that. Besides, you can be so nendously useful to me, now that n ill.

Rs. Alv. Yes, can't I, Oswald! I d almost bless your illness, as it driven you home to me. For I see e well that you are not my very yet; you must be won.

sw. [*impatiently*]. Yes, yes, yes; hat is just a way of talking. You t remember I am a sick man, ner. I can't concern myself much with anyone else; I have enough to do, thinking about myself.

Mrs. Alv. [*gently*]. I will be very good and patient.

Osw. And cheerful too, mother!

Mrs. Alv. Yes, my dear boy, you are quite right. [*Goes up to him.*] Now have I taken away all your remorse and self-reproach?

Osw. Yes, you have done that. But who will take away the fear?

Mrs. Alv. The fear?

Osw. [*crossing the room*]. Regina would have done it for one kind word.

Mrs. Alv. I don't understand you. What fear do you mean—and what has Regina to do with it?

Osw. Is it very late, mother?

Mrs. Alv. It is early morning. [*Looks out through the conservatory windows.*] The dawn is breaking already on the heights. And the sky is clear, Oswald. In a little while you will see the sun.

Osw. I am glad of that. After all, there may be many things yet for me to be glad of and to live for—

Mrs. Alv. I should hope so!

Osw. Even if I am not able to work—

Mrs. Alv. You will soon find you are able to work again now, my dear boy. You have no longer all those painful depressing thoughts to brood over.

Osw. No, it is a good thing that you have been able to rid me of those fancies. If only, now, I could overcome this one thing—. [*Sits down on the couch.*] Let us have a little chat, mother.

Mrs. Alv. Yes, let us. [*Pushes an*

armchair near to the couch and sits down beside him.]

Osw. The sun is rising—and you know all about it; so I don't feel the fear any longer.

Mrs. Alv. I know all about what?

Osw. [*without listening to her*]. Mother, isn't it the case that you said this evening there was nothing in the world you would not do for me if I asked you?

Mrs. Alv. Yes, certainly I said so.

Osw. And will you be as good as your word, mother?

Mrs. Alv. You may rely upon that, my own dear boy. I have nothing else to live for, but you.

Osw. Yes, yes; well, listen to me, mother. You are very strong-minded, I know. I want you to sit quite quiet when you hear what I am going to tell you.

Mrs. Alv. But what is this dreadful thing—?

Osw. You mustn't scream. Do you hear? Will you promise me that? We are going to sit and talk it over quite quietly. Will you promise me that, mother?

Mrs. Alv. Yes, yes, I promise—only tell me what it is.

Osw. Well, then, you must know that this fatigue of mine—and my not being able to think about my work—all that is not really the illness itself—

Mrs. Alv. What is the illness itself?

Osw. What I am suffering from is hereditary; it—[*touches his forehead, and speaks very quietly*]—it lies here.

Mrs. Alv. [*almost speechless*]. Oswald! No—no!

Osw. Don't scream; I can't stand it. Yes, I tell you, it lies here, waiting. And any time, any moment, it may break out.

Mrs. Alv. How horrible—!

Osw. Do keep quiet. That is the state I am in—

Mrs. Alv. [*springing up*]. It isn't true, Oswald! It is impossible! It can't be that!

Osw. I had one attack while I was abroad. It passed off quickly. But when I learnt the condition I had been in, then this dreadful haunting fear took possession of me.

Mrs. Alv. That was the fear, then—

Osw. Yes, it is so indescribably horrible, you know. If only it had been an ordinary mortal disease—. I am not so much afraid of dying; though, of course, I should like to live as long as I can.

Mrs. Alv. Yes, yes, Oswald, you must!

Osw. But this is so appallingly horrible. To become like a helpless child again—to have to be fed, to have to be—. Oh, it's unspeakable!

Mrs. Alv. My child has his mother to tend him.

Osw. [*jumping up*]. No, never; that is just what I won't endure! I dare not think what it would mean to linger on like that for years—to get old and grey like that. And you might die before I did. [*Sits down in* Mrs. Alving's *chair.*] Because it doesn't necessarily have a fatal end quickly, the doctor said. He called it a kind of softening of the brain—or something of that sort. [*Smiles mournfully.*] I think that expression sounds so nice. It always makes me think of cherry coloured velvet curtains—something that is soft to stroke.

MRS. ALV. [*with a scream*]. Oswald!

OSW. [*jumps up and walks about e room*]. And now you have taken egina from me! If I had only had r. She would have given me a help- g hand, I know.

MRS. ALV. [*going up to him*]. What you mean, my darling boy? Is there y help in the world I would not be lling to give you?

OSW. When I had recovered from e attack I had abroad, the doctor told e that when it recurred—and it will cur—there would be no more hope.

MRS. ALV. And he was heartless ough to—

OSW. I insisted on knowing. I told m I had arrangements to make—. *miles cunningly.*] And so I had. *akes a small box from his inner east-pocket.*] Mother, do you see is?

MRS. ALV. What is it?

OSW. Morphia powders.

MRS. ALV. [*looking at him in terror*]. swald—my boy!

OSW. I have twelve of them saved —

MRS. ALV. [*snatching at it*]. Give e the box, Oswald!

OSW. Not yet, mother. [*Puts it back his pocket.*]

MRS. ALV. I shall never get over is!

OSW. You must. If I had had Re- na here now, I would have told her ietly how things stand with me— d asked her to give me this last help- g hand. She would have helped me, m certain.

MRS. ALV. Never!

OSW. If this horrible thing had ne upon me and she had seen me lying helpless, like a baby, past help, past saving, past hope—with no chance of recovering—

MRS. ALV. Never in the world would Regina have done it.

OSW. Regina would have done it. Regina was so splendidly light-hearted. And she would very soon have tired of looking after an invalid like me.

MRS. ALV. Then thank heaven Regina is not here!

OSW. Well, now you have got to give me that helping hand, mother.

MRS. ALV. [*with a loud scream*]. I!

OSW. Who has a better right than you?

MRS. ALV. I! Your mother!

OSW. Just for that reason.

MRS. ALV. I, who gave you your life!

OSW. I never asked you for life. And what kind of a life was it that you gave me? I don't want it! You shall take it back!

MRS. ALV. Help! Help! [*Runs into the hall.*]

OSW. [*following her*]. Don't leave me! Where are you going?

MRS. ALV. [*in the hall*]. To fetch the doctor to you, Oswald! Let me out!

OSW. [*going into the hall*]. You shan't go out. And no one shall come in. [*Turns the key in the lock.*]

MRS. ALV. [*coming in again*]. Oswald! Oswald!—my child!

OSW. [*following her*]. Have you a mother's heart—and can bear to see me suffering this unspeakable terror?

MRS. ALV. [*controlling herself, after a moment's silence*]. There is my hand on it.

OSW. Will you—?

MRS. ALV. If it becomes necessary. But it shan't become necessary. No, no—it is impossible it should!

OSW. Let us hope so. And let us live together as long as we can. Thank you, mother.

[*He sits down in the armchair, which* MRS. ALVING *had moved beside the couch. Day is breaking; the lamp is still burning on the table.*]

MRS. ALV. [*coming cautiously nearer*]. Do you feel calmer now?

OSW. Yes.

MRS. ALV. [*bending over him*]. It has only been a dreadful fancy of yours, Oswald. Nothing but fancy. All this upset has been bad for you. But now you will get some rest, at home with your own mother, my darling boy. You shall have everything you want, just as you did when you were a little child.—There, now. The attack is over. You see how easily it passed off! I knew it would.—And look, Oswald, what a lovely day we are going to have? Brilliant sunshine. Now you will be able to see your home properly. [*She goes to the table and puts out the lamp. It is sunrise. The glaciers and peaks in the distance are seen bathed in bright morning light.*]

OSW. [*who has been sitting motionless in the armchair, with his back to the scene outside, suddenly says*]: Mother, give me the sun.

MRS. ALV. [*standing at the table, an looking at him in amazement*]. Wha do you say?

OSW. [*repeats in a dull, toneles voice*]. The sun—the sun.

MRS. ALV. [*going up to him*]. Os wald, what is the matter with you [OSWALD *seems to shrink up in th chair; all his muscles relax; his fac loses its expression, and his eyes star stupidly.* MRS. ALVING *is tremblin with terror.*] What is it! [*Screams.* Oswald! What is the matter with you [*Throws herself on her knees besid him and shakes him.*] Oswald! Oswald Look at me! Don't you know me!

OSW. [*in an expressionless voice, a before*]. The sun—the sun.

MRS. ALV. [*jumps up despairingly beats her head with her hands, an screams*]. I can't bear it! [*Whisper as though paralysed with fear.*] can't bear it! Never! [*Suddenly.* Where has he got it? [*Passes her han quickly over his coat.*] Here! [*Drau back a little way and cries:*] No, n no!—Yes!—no, no! [*She stands a fe steps from him, her hands thrust int her hair, and stares at him in speech less terror.*]

OSW. [*sitting motionless, as before* The sun—the sun.

VOLUME III

An Enemy of the People

THE PERSONS OF THE PLAY

DR. THOMAS STOCKMANN, Medical Officer of the Municipal Baths.

MRS. STOCKMANN, his wife.

PETRA, their daughter, a teacher.

EJLIF and MORTEN, their sons (aged 13 and 10 respectively).

PETER STOCKMANN, the Doctor's elder brother; Mayor of the Town and Chief Constable, Chairman of the Baths' Committee, etc., etc.

MORTEN KIIL, a tanner (Mrs. Stockmann's adoptive father).

HOVSTAD, editor of the "People's Messenger."

BILLING, sub-editor.

CAPTAIN HORSTER.

ASLAKSEN, a printer.

Men of various conditions and occupations, some few women, and a troop of schoolboys—the audience at a public meeting.

The action takes place in a coast town in southern Norway.

ACT I

SCENE—DR. STOCKMANN'S *sitting-room. It is evening. The room is plainly but neatly appointed and furnished. In the right-hand wall are two doors; the farther leads out to the hall, the nearer to the doctor's study. In the left-hand wall, opposite the door leading to the hall, is a door leading to the other rooms occupied by the family. In the middle of the same wall stands the stove, and, further forward, a couch with a looking-glass hanging over it and an oval table in front of it. On the table, a lighted lamp, with a lamp-shade. At the back of the room, an open door leads to the dining-room.* BILLING *is seen sitting at the dining table, on which a lamp is burning. He has a napkin tucked under his chin, and* MRS. STOCKMANN *is standing by the table handing him a large plate-full of roast beef. The other places at the table are empty, and the table somewhat in disorder, a meal having evidently recently been finished.*

MRS. STO. You see, if you come an hour late, Mr. Billing, you have to put up with cold meat.

BILL. [*as he eats.*] It is uncommonly good, thank you—remarkably good.

MRS. STO. My husband makes such a point of having his meals punctually, you know—

BILL. That doesn't affect me a bit. Indeed, I almost think I enjoy a meal all the better when I can sit down and eat all by myself and undisturbed.

MRS. STO. Oh well, as long as you are enjoying it—. [*Turns to the hall door, listening.*] I expect that is Mr. Hovstad coming too.

BILL. Very likely.

[PETER STOCKMANN *comes in. He wears an overcoat and his official hat, and carries a stick.*]

PETER. Good evening, Katherine.

MRS. STO. [*coming forward into the sitting-room*]. Ah, good evening—is

it you? How good of you to come up and see us!

PETER. I happened to be passing, and so—[*looks into the dining-room*]. But you have company with you, I see.

MRS. STO. [*a little embarrassed*]. Oh, no—it was quite by chance he came in. [*Hurriedly.*] Won't you come in and have something, too?

PETER. I! No, thank you. Good gracious—hot meat at night! Not with my digestion.

MRS. STO. Oh, but just once in a way—

PETER. No, no, my dear lady; I stick to my tea and bread and butter. It is much more wholesome in the long run—and a little more economical, too.

MRS. STO. [*smiling*]. Now you mustn't think that Thomas and I are spendthrifts.

PETER. Not you, my dear; I would never think that of you. [*Points to the Doctor's study.*] Is he not at home?

MRS. STO. No, he went out for a little turn after supper—he and the boys.

PETER. I doubt if that is a wise thing to do. [*Listens.*] I fancy I hear him coming now.

MRS. STO. No, I don't think it is he. [*A knock is heard at the door.*] Come in! [HOVSTAD *comes in from the hall.*] Oh, it is you, Mr. Hovstad!

HOV. Yes, I hope you will forgive me, but I was delayed at the printer's. Good evening, Mr. Mayor.

PETER. [*bowing a little distantly*]. Good evening. You have come on business, no doubt.

HOV. Partly. It's about an article for the paper.

PETER. So I imagined. I hear my brother has become a prolific contributor to the "People's Messenger."

HOV. Yes, he is good enough to write in the "People's Messenger" when he has any home truths to tell.

MRS. STO. [*to* HOVSTAD]. But won't you—? [*Points to the dining-room.*]

PETER. Quite so, quite so. I don't blame him in the least, as a writer, for addressing himself to the quarters where he will find the readiest sympathy. And, besides that, I personally have no reason to bear any ill will to your paper, Mr. Hovstad.

HOV. I quite agree with you.

PETER. Taking one thing with another, there is an excellent spirit of toleration in the town—an admirable municipal spirit. And it all springs from the fact of our having a great common interest to unite us—an interest that is in an equally high degree the concern of every right-minded citizen—

HOV. The Baths, yes.

PETER. Exactly—our fine, new, handsome Baths. Mark my words, Mr. Hovstad—the Baths will become the focus of our municipal life! Not a doubt of it!

MRS. STO. That is just what Thomas says.

PETER. Think how extraordinarily the place has developed within the last year or two! Money has been flowing in, and there is some life and some business doing in the town. Houses and landed property are rising in value every day.

Hov. And unemployment is diminishing.

Peter. Yes, that is another thing. The burden of the poor rates has been lightened, to the great relief of the propertied classes; and that relief will be even greater if only we get a really good summer this year, and lots of visitors—plenty of invalids, who will make the Baths talked about.

Hov. And there is a good prospect of that, I hear.

Peter. It looks very promising. Enquiries about apartments and that sort of thing are reaching us every day.

Hov. Well, the doctor's article will come in very suitably.

Peter. Has he been writing something just lately?

Hov. This is something he wrote in the winter; a recommendation of the Baths—an account of the excellent sanitary conditions here. But I held the article over, temporarily.

Peter. Ah,—some little difficulty about it, I suppose?

Hov. No, not at all; I thought it would be better to wait till the spring, because it is just at this time that people begin to think seriously about their summer quarters.

Peter. Quite right; you were perfectly right, Mr. Hovstad.

Hov. Yes, Thomas is really indefatigable when it is a question of the Baths.

Peter. Well—remember, he is the Medical Officer of the Baths.

Hov. Yes, and what is more, they owe their existence to him.

Peter. To him? Indeed! It is true I have heard from time to time that some people are of that opinion. At the same time I must say I imagined that I took a modest part in the enterprise.

Mrs. Sto. Yes, that is what Thomas is always saying.

Hov. But who denies it, Mr. Stockmann? You set the thing going and made a practical concern of it; we all know that. I only meant that the idea of it came first from the doctor.

Peter. Oh, ideas—yes! My brother has had plenty of them in his time—unfortunately. But when it is a question of putting an idea into practical shape, you have to apply to a man of different mettle, Mr. Hovstad. And I certainly should have thought that in this house at least—

Mrs. Sto. My dear Peter—

Hov. How can you think that—?

Mrs. Sto. Won't you go in and have something, Mr. Hovstad? My husband is sure to be back directly.

Hov. Thank you, perhaps just a morsel. [*Goes into the dining-room.*]

Peter [*lowering his voice a little*]. It is a curious thing that these farmers' sons never seem to lose their want of tact.

Mrs. Sto. Surely it is not worth bothering about! Cannot you and Thomas share the credit as brothers?

Peter. I should have thought so; but apparently some people are not satisfied with a share.

Mrs. Sto. What nonsense! You and Thomas get on so capitally together. [*Listens.*] There he is at last, I think. [*Goes out and opens the door leading to the hall.*]

Dr. Sto. [*laughing and talking outside*]. Look here—here is another

guest for you, Katherine. Isn't that jolly! Come in, Captain Horster; hang your coat up on this peg. Ah, you don't wear an overcoat. Just think, Katherine; I met him in the street and could hardly persuade him to come up! [CAPTAIN HORSTER *comes into the room and greets* MRS. STOCKMANN. *He is followed by* DR. STOCKMANN.] Come along in, boys. They are ravenously hungry again, you know. Come along, Captain Horster; you must have a slice of beef. [*Pushes* HORSTER *into the dining-room.* EJLIF *and* MORTEN *go in after them.*]

MRS. STO. But, Thomas, don't you see—?

DR. STO. [*turning in the doorway*]. Oh, is it you, Peter? [*Shakes hands with him.*] Now that is very delightful.

PETER. Unfortunately I must go in a moment—

DR. STO. Rubbish! There is some toddy just coming in. You haven't forgotten the toddy, Katherine?

MRS. STO. Of course not; the water is boiling now. [*Goes into the dining-room.*]

PETER. Toddy too!

DR. STO. Yes, sit down and we will have it comfortably.

PETER. Thanks, I never care about an evening's drinking.

DR. STO. But this isn't an evening's drinking.

PETER. It seems to me—. [*Looks towards the dining-room.*] It is extraordinary how they can put away all that food.

DR. STO. [*rubbing his hands*]. Yes, isn't it splendid to see young people eat? They have always got an appetite, you know! That's as it should be. Lots of food—to build up their strength! They are the people who are going to stir up the fermenting forces of the future, Peter.

PETER. May I ask what they will find here to "stir up," as you put it?

DR. STO. Ah, you must ask the young people that—when the time comes. We shan't be able to see it, of course. That stands to reason—two old fogies, like us—

PETER. Really, really! I must say that is an extremely odd expression to—

DR. STO. Oh, you mustn't take me too literally, Peter. I am so heartily happy and contented, you know. I think it is such an extraordinary piece of good fortune to be in the middle of all this growing, germinating life. It is a splendid time to live in! It is as if a whole new world were being created around one.

PETER. Do you really think so?

DR. STO. Ah, naturally you can't appreciate it as keenly as I. You have lived all your life in these surroundings and your impressions have got blunted. But I, who have been buried all these years in my little corner up north, almost without ever seeing a stranger who might bring new ideas with him—well, in my case it has just the same effect as if I had been transported into the middle of a crowded city.

PETER. Oh, a city—!

DR. STO. I know, I know; it is all cramped enough here, compared with many other places. But there is life here—there is promise—there are innumerable things to work for and fight for; and that is the main thing. [*Calls.*]

Katherine, hasn't the postman been here?

Mrs. Sto. [*from the dining-room*]. No.

Dr. Sto. And then to be comfortably off, Peter! That is something one learns to value, when one has been on the brink of starvation, as we have.

Peter. Oh, surely—

Dr. Sto. Indeed I can assure you we have often been very hard put to it, up there. And now to be able to live like a lord! To-day, for instance, we had roast beef for dinner—and, what is more, for supper too. Won't you come and have a little bit? Or let me show it you, at any rate? Come here—

Peter. No, no—not for worlds!

Dr. Sto. Well, but just come here then. Do you see, we have got a tablecover?

Peter. Yes, I noticed it.

Dr. Sto. And we have got a lampshade too. Do you see? All out of Katherine's savings! It makes the room so cosy. Don't you think so? Just stand here for a moment—no, no, not there—just here, that's it! Look now, when you get the light on it altogether—I really think it looks very nice, doesn't it?

Peter. Oh, if you can afford luxuries of this kind—

Dr. Sto. Yes, I can afford it now. Katherine tells me I earn almost as much as we spend.

Peter. Almost—yes!

Dr. Sto. But a scientific man must live in a little bit of style. I am quite sure an ordinary civil servant spends more in a year than I do.

Peter. I daresay. A civil servant —a man in a well-paid position—

Dr. Sto. Well, any ordinary merchant, then! A man in that position spends two or three times as much as—

Peter. It just depends on circumstances.

Dr. Sto. At all events I assure you I don't waste money unprofitably. But I can't find it in my heart to deny myself the pleasure of entertaining my friends. I need that sort of thing, you know. I have lived for so long shut out of it all, that it is a necessity of life to me to mix with young, eager, ambitious men, men of liberal and active minds; and that describes every one of those fellows who are enjoying their supper in there. I wish you knew more of Hovstad—

Peter. By the way, Hovstad was telling me he was going to print another article of yours.

Dr. Sto. An article of mine?

Peter. Yes, about the Baths. An article you wrote in the winter.

Dr. Sto. Oh, that one! No, I don't intend that to appear just for the present.

Peter. Why not? It seems to me that this would be the most opportune moment.

Dr. Sto. Yes, very likely—under normal conditions. [*Crosses the room.*]

Peter [*following him with his eyes*]. Is there anything abnormal about the present conditions?

Dr. Sto. [*standing still*]. To tell you the truth, Peter, I can't say just at this moment—at all events not to-night. There may be much that is very abnormal about the present conditions—and it is possible there may be nothing abnormal about them at all. It is quite

possible it may be merely my imagination.

PETER. I must say it all sounds most mysterious. Is there something going on that I am to be kept in ignorance of? I should have imagined that I, as Chairman of the governing body of the Baths—

DR. STO. And I should have imagined that I—. Oh, come, don't let us fly out at one another, Peter.

PETER. Heaven forbid! I am not in the habit of flying out at people, as you call it. But I am entitled to request most emphatically that all arrangements shall be made in a business-like manner, through the proper channels, and shall be dealt with by the legally constituted authorities. I can allow no going behind our backs by any roundabout means.

DR. STO. Have I ever at any time tried to go behind your backs!

PETER. You have an ingrained tendency to take your own way, at all events; and that is almost equally inadmissible in a well ordered community. The individual ought undoubtedly to acquiesce in subordinating himself to the community—or, to speak more accurately, to the authorities who have the care of the community's welfare.

DR. STO. Very likely. But what the deuce has all this got to do with me?

PETER. That is exactly what you never appear to be willing to learn, my dear Thomas. But, mark my words, some day you will have to suffer for it—sooner or later. Now I have told you. Good-bye.

DR. STO. Have you taken leave of your senses? You are on the wrong scent altogether.

PETER. I am not usually that. You must excuse me now if I—[*calls into the dining-room*]. Good night, Katherine. Good night, gentlemen. [*Goes out.*]

MRS. STO. [*coming from the dining-room*]. Has he gone?

DR. STO. Yes, and in such a bad temper.

MRS. STO. But, dear Thomas, what have you been doing to him again?

DR. STO. Nothing at all. And, anyhow, he can't oblige me to make my report before the proper time.

MRS. STO. What have you got to make a report to him about?

DR. STO. Hm! Leave that to me, Katherine.—It is an extraordinary thing that the postman doesn't come.

[HOVSTAD, BILLING *and* HORSTER *have got up from the table and come into the sitting-room.* EJLIF *and* MORTEN *come in after them.*]

BILL. [*stretching himself.*] Ah!—one feels a new man after a meal like that.

HOV. The mayor wasn't in a very sweet temper to-night, then.

DR. STO. It is his stomach; he has a wretched digestion.

HOV. I rather think it was us two of the "People's Messenger" that he couldn't digest.

MRS. STO. I thought you came out of it pretty well with him.

HOV. Oh! yes; but it isn't anything more than a sort of truce.

BILL. That is just what it is! That word sums up the situation.

DR. STO. We must remember that Peter is a lonely man, poor chap. He has no home comforts of any kind; nothing but everlasting business. And all that infernal weak tea wash that

ıe pours into himself! Now then, my ɔoys, bring chairs up to the table. Aren't we going to have that toddy, Katherine?

Mrs. Sto. [*going into the dining-room*]. I am just getting it.

Dr. Sto. Sit down here on the couch ɔeside me, Captain Horster. We so ɛeldom see you—. Please sit down, my friends. [*They sit down at the table.* Mrs. Stockmann *brings a tray, with a spirit-lamp, glasses, bottles, etc., upon it.*]

Mrs. Sto. There you are! This is arrack, and this is rum, and this one s the brandy. Now every one must ıelp himself.

Dr. Sto. [*taking a glass*]. We will. [*They all mix themselves some toddy.*] And let us have the cigars. Ejlif, you know where the box is. And you, Morten, can fetch my pipe. [*The two boys go into the room on the right.*] I have a suspicion that Ejlif pockets a cigar now and then!—but I take no notice of t. [*Calls out.*] And my smoking-cap too, Morten. Katherine, you can tell ıim where I left it. Ah, he has got it. [*The boys bring the various things.*] Now, my friends. I stick to my pipe, you know. This one has seen plenty of ɔad weather with me up north. [*Touches glasses with them.*] Your good health! Ah, it is good to be sitting snug and warm here.

Mrs. Sto. [*who sits knitting*]. Do you sail soon, Captain Horster?

Hors. I expect to be ready to sail next week.

Mrs. Sto. I suppose you are going to America?

Hors. Yes, that is the plan.

Mrs. Sto. Then you won't be able to take part in the coming election.

Hors. Is there going to be an election?

Bill. Didn't you know.

Hors. No, I don't mix myself up with those things.

Bill. But do you not take an interest in public affairs.

Hors. No, I don't know anything about politics.

Bill. All the same, one ought to vote, at any rate.

Hors. Even if one doesn't know anything about what is going on?

Bill. Doesn't know! What do you mean by that? A community is like a ship; every one ought to be prepared to take the helm.

Hors. May be that is all very well on shore; but on board ship it wouldn't work.

Hov. It is astonishing how little most sailors care about what goes on on shore.

Bill. Very extraordinary.

Dr. Sto. Sailors are like birds of passage; they feel equally at home in any latitude. And that is only an additional reason for our being all the more keen, Hovstad. Is there to be anything of public interest in to-morrow's "Messenger"?

Hov. Nothing about municipal affairs. But the day after to-morrow I was thinking of printing your article—

Dr. Sto. Ah, devil take it—my article! Look here, that must wait a bit.

Hov. Really? We had just got convenient space for it, and I thought it was just the opportune moment—

Dr. Sto. Yes, yes, very likely you are right; but it must wait all the same.

I will explain to you later. [PETRA *comes in from the hall, in hat and cloak and with a bundle of exercise books under her arm.*]

PETRA. Good evening.

DR. STO. Good evening, Petra; come along.

[*Mutual greetings;* PETRA *takes off her things and puts them down on a chair by the door.*]

PETRA. And you have all been sitting here enjoying yourselves, while I have been out slaving!

DR. STO. Well, come and enjoy yourself too!

BILL. May I mix a glass for you?

PETRA [*coming to the table*]. Thanks, I would rather do it; you always mix it too strong. But I forgot, father—I have a letter for you. [*Goes to the chair where she has laid her things.*]

DR. STO. A letter? From whom?

PETRA [*looking in her coat pocket*]. The postman gave it to me just as I was going out—

DR. STO. [*getting up and going to her*]. And you only give it to me now!

PETRA. I really had not time to run up again. There it is!

DR. STO. [*seizing the letter*]. Let's see, let's see, child! [*Looks at the address.*] Yes, that's all right!

MRS. STO. Is it the one you have been expecting so anxiously, Thomas?

DR. STO. Yes, it is. I must go to my room now and—. Where shall I get a light, Katherine? Is there no lamp in my room again?

MRS. STO. Yes, your lamp is all ready lit on your desk.

DR. STO. Good, good. Excuse me for a moment—. [*Goes into his study.*]

PETRA. What do you suppose it is, mother?

MRS. STO. I don't know; for the last day or two he has always been asking if the postman has not been.

BILL. Probably some country patient.

PETRA. Poor old dad!—he will overwork himself soon. [*Mixes a glass for herself.*] There, that will taste good!

HOV. Have you been teaching in the evening school again to-day?

PETRA [*sipping from her glass*]. Two hours.

BILL. And four hours of school in the morning—

PETRA. Five hours.

MRS. STO. And you have still got exercises to correct, I see.

PETRA. A whole heap, yes.

HORS. You are pretty full up with work too, it seems to me.

PETRA. Yes—but that is good. One is so delightfully tired after it.

BILL. Do you like that?

PETRA. Yes, because one sleeps so well then.

MOR. You must be dreadfully wicked, Petra.

PETRA. Wicked?

MOR. Yes, because you work so much. Mr. Rörlund says work is a punishment for our sins.

EJL. Pooh, what a duffer you are, to believe a thing like that!

MRS. STO. Come, come, Ejlif!

BILL. [*laughing*]. That's capital!

HOV. Don't you want to work as hard as that, Morten?

MOR. No, indeed I don't.

HOV. What do you want to be, then?

MOR. I should like best to be a Viking.

EJL. You would have to be a pagan then.

MOR. Well, I could become a pagan, couldn't I?

BILL. I agree with you, Morten! My sentiments, exactly.

MRS. STO. [*signalling to him*]. I am sure that is not true, Mr. Billing.

BILL. Yes, I swear it is! I am a pagan, and I am proud of it. Believe me, before long we shall all be pagans.

MOR. And then shall be allowed to do anything we like?

BILL. Well, you see, Morten—.

MRS. STO. You must go to your room now, boys; I am sure you have some lessons to learn for to-morrow.

EJL. I should like so much to stay a little longer—

MRS. STO. No, no; away you go, both of you. [*The boys say good night and go into the room on the left.*]

HOV. Do you really think it can do the boys any harm to hear such things?

MRS. STO. I don't know; but I don't like it.

PETRA. But you know, mother, I think you really are wrong about it.

MRS. STO. Maybe, but I don't like it —not in our own home.

PETRA. There is so much falsehood both at home and at school. At home one must not speak, and at school we have to stand and tell lies to the children.

HORS. Tell lies?

PETRA. Yes, don't you suppose we have to teach them all sorts of things that we don't believe?

BILL. That is perfectly true.

PETRA. If only I had the means I would start a school of my own, and it would be conducted on very different lines.

BILL. Oh, bother the means—!

HORS. Well if you are thinking of that, Miss Stockmann, I shall be delighted to provide you with a schoolroom. The great big old house my father left me is standing almost empty; there is an immense dining-room downstairs—

PETRA [*laughing*]. Thank you very much; but I am afraid nothing will come of it.

HOV. No, Miss Petra is much more likely to take to journalism, I expect. By the way, have you had time to do anything with that English story you promised to translate for us?

PETRA. No, not yet; but you shall have it in good time.

[DR. STOCKMANN *comes in from his room with an open letter in his hand.*]

DR. STO. [*waving the letter*]. Well, now the town will have something now to talk about, I can tell you!

BILL. Something new?

MRS. STO. What is this?

DR. STO. A great discovery, Katherine.

HOV. Really?

MRS. STO. A discovery of yours?

DR. STO. A discovery of mine. [*Walks up and down.*] Just let them come saying, as usual, that it is all fancy and a crazy man's imagination! But they will be careful what they say this time, I can tell you!

PETRA. But, father, tell us what it is.

DR. STO. Yes, yes—only give me time, and you shall know all about it. If only I had Peter here now! It just shows how we men can go about form-

ing our judgments, when in reality we are as blind as any moles—

HOV. What are you driving at, Doctor?

DR. STO. [*standing still by the table*]. Isn't it the universal opinion that our town is a healthy spot?

HOV. Certainly.

DR. STO. Quite an unusually healthy spot, in fact—a place that deserves to be recommended in the warmest possible manner either for invalids or for people who are well—

MRS. STO. Yes, but my dear Thomas —

DR. STO. And we have been recommending it and praising it—I have written and written, both in the "Messenger" and in pamphlets—

HOV. Well, what then?

DR. STO. And the Baths—we have called them the "main artery of the town's life-blood," the "nerve-centre of our town," and the devil knows what else—

BILL. "The town's pulsating heart" was the expression I once used on an important occasion—

DR. STO. Quite so. Well, do you know what they really are, these great, splendid, much praised Baths, that have cost so much money—do you know what they are?

HOV. No, what are they?

MRS. STO. Yes, what are they?

DR. STO. The whole place is a pesthouse!

PETRA. The Baths, father?

MRS. STO. [*at the same time*]. Our Baths!

HOV. But, Doctor—

BILL. Absolutely incredible!

DR. STO. The whole Bath establishment is a whited, poisoned sepulchre, I tell you—the gravest possible danger to the public health! All the nastiness up at Mölledal, all that stinking filth, is infecting the water in the conduit-pipes leading to the reservoir; and the same cursed, filthy poison oozes out on the shore too—

HORS. Where the bathing-place is?

DR. STO. Just there.

HOV. How do you come to be so certain of all this, Doctor?

DR. STO. I have investigated the matter most conscientiously. For a long time past I have suspected something of the kind. Last year we had some very strange cases of illness among the visitors—typhoid cases, and cases of gastric fever—

MRS. STO. Yes, that is quite true.

DR. STO. At the time, we supposed the visitors had been infected before they came; but later on, in the winter, I began to have a different opinion; and so I set myself to examine the water, as well as I could.

MRS. STO. Then that is what you have been so busy with?

DR. STO. Indeed I have been busy, Katherine. But here I had none of the necessary scientific apparatus; so I sent samples, both of the drinking-water and of the sea-water, up to the University, to have an accurate analysis made by a chemist.

HOV. And have you got that?

DR. STO. [*showing him the letter*]. Here it is! It proves the presence of decomposed organic matter in the water —it is full of infusoria. The water is absolutely dangerous to use, either internally or externally.

MRS. STO. What a mercy you discovered it in time.

DR. STO. You may well say so.

HOV. And what do you propose to do now, Doctor?

DR. STO. To see the matter put right—naturally.

HOV. Can that be done?

DR. STO. It must be done. Otherwise the Baths will be absolutely useless and wasted. But we need not anticipate that; I have a very clear idea what we shall have to do.

MRS. STO. But why have you kept this all so secret, dear?

DR. STO. Do you suppose I was going to run about the town gossiping about it, before I had absolute proof? No, thank you. I am not such a fool.

PETRA. Still, you might have told us—

DR. STO. Not a living soul. But tomorrow you may run round to the old Badger—

MRS. STO. Oh, Thomas! Thomas!

DR. STO. Well, to your grandfather, then. The old boy will have something to be astonished at! I know he thinks I am cracked—and there are lots of other people think so too, I have noticed. But now these good folks shall see—they shall just see—! [*Walks about, rubbing his hands.*] There will be a nice upset in the town, Katherine; you can't imagine what it will be. All the conduit-pipes will have to be relaid.

HOV. [*getting up*]. All the conduit-pipes—?

DR. STO. Yes, of course. The intake is too low down; it will have to be lifted to a position much higher up.

PETRA. Then you were right after all.

DR. STO. Ah, you remember, Petra—I wrote opposing the plans before the work was begun. But at that time no one would listen to me. Well, I am going to let them have it, now! Of course I have prepared a report for the Baths Committee; I have had it ready for a week, and was only waiting for this to come. [*Shows the letter.*] Now it shall go off at once. [*Goes into his room and comes back with some papers.*] Look at that! Four closely written sheets!—and the letter shall go with them. Give me a bit of paper, Katherine—something to wrap them up in. That will do! Now give it to—to—[*stamps his foot*]—what the duce is her name?—give it to the maid, and tell her to take it at once to the Mayor.

[MRS. STOCKMANN *takes the packet and goes out through the dining-room.*]

PETRA. What do you think uncle Peter will say, father?

DR. STO. What is there for him to say? I should think he would be very glad that such an important truth has been brought to light.

HOV. Will you let me print a short note about your discovery in the "Messenger"?

DR. STO. I shall be very much obliged if you will.

HOV. It is very desirable that the public should be informed of it without delay.

DR. STO. Certainly.

MRS. STO. [*coming back*]. She has just gone with it.

BILL. Upon my soul, Doctor, you are going to be the foremost man in the town.

DR. STO. [*walking about happily*].

Nonsense! As a matter of fact I have done nothing more than my duty. I have only made a lucky find—that's all. Still, all the same—

BILL. Hovstad, don't you think the town ought to give Dr. Stockmann some sort of testimonial?

HOV. I will suggest it, anyway.

BILL. And I will speak to Aslaksen about it.

DR. STO. No, my good friends, don't let us have any of that nonsense. I won't hear of anything of the kind. And if the Baths Committee should think of voting me an increase of salary, I will not accept it. Do you hear, Katherine?—I won't accept it.

MRS. STO. You are quite right, Thomas.

PETRA [*lifting her glass*]. Your health, father!

HOV. *and* BILL. Your health, Doctor! Good health!

HORS. [*touches glasses with* DR. STOCKMANN]. I hope it will bring you nothing but good luck.

DR. STO. Thank you, thank you, my dear fellows! I feel tremendously happy! It is a splendid thing for a man to be able to feel that he has done a service to his native town and to his fellow-citizens. Hurrah, Katherine! [*He puts his arms round her and whirls her round and round, while she protests with laughing cries. They all laugh, clap their hands, and cheer the* DOCTOR. *The boys put their heads in at the door to see what is going on.*]

ACT II

SCENE—*The same. The door into the dining-room is shut. It is morning.* MRS. STOCKMANN, *with a sealed letter in her hand, comes in from the dining-room, goes to the door of the* DOCTOR'S *study, and peeps in.*

MRS. STO. Are you in, Thomas?

DR. STO. [*from within his room*]. Yes, I have just come in. [*Comes into the room.*] What is it?

MRS. STO. A letter from your brother.

DR. STO. Aha, let us see? [*Opens the letter and reads:*] "I return herewith the manuscript you sent me"—[*reads on in a low murmur*]. Hm!—

MRS. STO. What does he say?

DR. STO. [*putting the paper in his pocket*]. Oh, he only writes that he will come up here himself about midday.

MRS. STO. Well, try and remember to be at home this time.

DR. STO. That will be all right; I have got through all my morning visits.

MRS. STO. I am extremely curious to know how he takes it.

DR. STO. You will see he won't like it's having been I, and not he, that made the discovery.

MRS. STO. Aren't you a little nervous about that?

DR. STO. Oh, he really will be pleased enough, you know. But, at the same time, Peter is so confoundedly afraid of anyone's doing any service to the town except himself.

MRS. STO. I will tell you what, Thomas—you should be good natured, and share the credit of this with him. Couldn't you make out that it was he who set you on the scent of this discovery?

DR. STO. I am quite willing. If only I can get the thing set right. I—

[MORTEN KIIL *puts his head in through the door leading from the*

hall, looks round in an enquiring manner, and chuckles.]

MORTEN KIIL [*slyly*]. Is it—is it true?

MRS. STO. [*going to the door*]. Father!—is it you?

DR. STO. Ah, Mr. Kiil—good morning, good morning!

MRS. STO. But come along in.

MORTEN KIIL. If it is true, I will; if not, I am off.

DR. STO. If what is true?

MORTEN KIIL. This tale about the water supply. Is it true?

DR. STO. Certainly it is true. But how did you come to hear it?

MORTEN KIIL [*coming in*]. Petra ran in on her way to the school—

DR. STO. Did she?

MORTEN KIIL. Yes; and she declares that—. I thought she was only making a fool of me, but it isn't like Petra to do that.

DR. STO. Of course not. How could you imagine such a thing!

MORTEN KIIL. Oh well, it is better never to trust anybody; you may find you have been made a fool of before you know where you are. But it is really true, all the same?

DR. STO. You can depend upon it that it is true. Won't you sit down? [*Settles him on the couch.*] Isn't it a real bit of luck for the town—

MORTEN KIIL [*suppressing his laughter*]. A bit of luck for the town?

DR. STO. Yes, that I made the discovery in good time.

MORTEN KIIL [*as before.*] Yes, yes, yes!—But I should never have thought you the sort of man to pull your own brother's leg like this!

DR. STO. Pull his leg!

MRS. STO. Really, father dear—

MORTEN KIIL [*resting his hands and his chin on the handle of his stick and winking slyly at the* DOCTOR]. Let me see, what was the story? Some kind of beast that had got into the water-pipes, wasn't it?

DR. STO. Infusoria—yes.

MORTEN KIIL. And a lot of these beasts had got in, according to Petra—a tremendous lot.

DR. STO. Certainly; hundreds of thousands of them, probably.

MORTEN KIIL. But no one can see them—isn't that so?

DR. STO. Yes; you can't see them.

MORTEN KIIL [*with a quiet chuckle*]. Damme—it's the finest story I have ever heard!

DR. STO. What do you mean?

MORTEN KIIL. But you will never get the Mayor to believe a think like that.

DR. STO. We shall see.

MORTEN KIIL. Do you think he will be fool enough to—?

DR. STO. I hope the whole town will be fools enough.

MORTEN KIIL. The whole town! Well, it wouldn't be a bad thing. It would just serve them right, and teach them a lesson. They think themselves so much cleverer than we old fellows. They hounded me out of the council; they did, I tell you—they hounded me out. Now they shall pay for it. You pull their legs too, Thomas!

DR. STO. Really, I—

MORTEN KIIL. You pull their legs! [*Gets up.*] If you can work it so that the Mayor and his friends all swallow the same bait, I will give ten pounds to a charity—like a shot!

DR. STO. That is very kind of you.

MORTEN KIIL. Yes, I haven't got much money to throw away, I can tell you; but if you can work this, I will give five pounds to a charity at Christmas.

[HOVSTAD *comes in by the hall door.*]

HOV. Good morning! [*Stops.*] Oh, I beg your pardon—

DR. STO. Not at all; come in.

MORTEN KIIL [*with another chuckle*]. Oho!—is he in this too?

HOV. What do you mean?

DR. STO. Certainly he is.

MORTEN KIIL. I might have known it! It must get into the papers. You know how to do it, Thomas! Set your wits to work. Now I must go.

DR. STO. Won't you stay a little while?

MORTEN KIIL. No, I must be off now. You keep up this game for all it is worth; you won't repent it, I'm damned if you will!

[*He goes out;* MRS. STOCKMANN *follows him into the hall.*]

DR. STO. [*laughing*]. Just imagine —the old chap doesn't believe a word of all this about the water supply.

HOV. Oh, that was it, then?

DR. STO. Yes, that was what we were talking about. Perhaps it is the same thing that brings you here?

HOV. Yes, it is. Can you spare me a few minutes, Doctor?

DR. STO. As long as you like, my dear fellow.

HOV. Have you heard from the Mayor yet?

DR. STO. Not yet. He is coming here later.

HOV. I have given the matter a great deal of thought since last night.

DR. STO. Well?

HOV. From your point of view, as a doctor and a man of science, this affair of the water-supply is an isolated matter. I mean, you do not realise that it involves a great many other things.

DR. STO. How, do you mean?—Let us sit down, my dear fellow. No, sit here on the couch. (HOVSTAD *sits down on the couch,* DR. STOCKMANN *on a chair on the other side of the table.*] Now then. You mean that—?

HOV. You said yesterday that the pollution of the water was due to impurities in the soil.

DR. STO. Yes, unquestionably it is; due to that poisonous morass up at Mölledal.

HOV. Begging your pardon, doctor, I fancy it is due to quite another morass altogether.

DR. STO. What morass?

HOV. The morass that the whole life of our town is built on and is rotting in.

DR. STO. What the deuce are you driving at, Hovstad?

HOV. The whole of the town's interests have, little by little, got into the hands of a pack of officials.

DR. STO. Oh, come!—they are not all officials.

HOV. No, but those that are not officials are at any rate the officials' friends and adherents; it is the wealthy folk, the old families in the town, that have got us entirely in their hands.

DR. STO. Yes, but after all they are men of ability and knowledge.

HOV. Did they show any ability or knowledge when they laid the conduit-pipes where they are now?

DR. STO. No, of course that was a great piece of stupidity on their part. But that is going to be set right now.

Hov. Do you think that will be all ıch plain sailing?

Dr. Sto. Plain sailing or no, it has ɔt to be done, anyway.

Hov. Yes, provided the press takes p the question.

Dr. Sto. I don't think that will be ecessary, my dear fellow, I am cer- ıin my brother—

Hov. Excuse me, doctor; I feel ɔund to tell you I am inclined to take ıe matter up.

Dr. Sto. In the paper?

Hov. Yes. When I took over the People's Messenger" my idea was to reak up this ring of self-opinionated d fossils who had got hold of all the ıfluence.

Dr. Sto. But you know you told me ɔurself what the result had been; you early ruined your paper.

Hov. Yes, at the time we were ob- ged to climb down a peg or two, it is uite true; because there was a danger the whole project of the Baths com- g to nothing if they failed us. But ɔw the scheme has been carried rough, and we can dispense with these and gentlemen.

Dr. Sto. Dispense with them, yes; ıt we owe them a great debt of grati- ıde.

Hov. That shall be recognised un- rudgingly. But a journalist of my emocratic tendencies cannot let such opportunity as this slip. The bubble official infallibility must be pricked. his superstition must be destroyed, ke any other.

Dr. Sto. I am whole-heartedly with ɔu in that, Mr. Hovstad; if it is a perstition, away with it!

Hov. I should be very reluctant to ing the Mayor into it, because he is your brother. But I am sure you will agree with me that truth should be the first consideration.

Dr. Sto. That goes without saying. [*With sudden emphasis.*] Yes, but—but—

Hov. You must not misjudge me. I am neither more self-interested nor more ambitious than most men.

Dr. Sto. My dear fellow—who suggests anything of the kind?

Hov. I am of humble origin, as you know; and that has given me opportunities of knowing what is the most crying need in the humbler ranks of life. It is that they should be allowed some part in the direction of public affairs, Doctor. That is what will develop their faculties and intelligence and self respect—

Dr. Sto. I quite appreciate that.

Hov. Yes—and in my opinion a journalist incurs a heavy responsibility if he neglects a favourable opportunity of emancipating the masses — the humble and oppressed. I know well enough that in exalted circles I shall be called an agitator, and all that sort of thing; but they may call what they like. If only my conscience doesn't reproach me, then—

Dr. Sto. Quite right; Quite right, Mr. Hovstad. But all the same—devil take it! [*A knock is heard at the door.*] Come in!

[Aslaksen *appears at the door. He is poorly but decently dressed, in black, with a slightly crumpled white neckcloth; he wears gloves and has a felt hat in his hand.*]

Asl. [*bowing*]. Excuse my taking the liberty, Doctor—

Dr. Sto. [*getting up*]. Ah, it is you, Aslaksen!

ASL. Yes, Doctor.

HOV. [*standing up*]. Is it me you want, Aslaksen?

ASL. No; I didn't know I should find you here. No, it was the Doctor I—

DR. STO. I am quite at your service. What is it?

ASL. Is what I heard from Mr. Billing true, sir—that you mean to improve our water-supply?

DR. STO. Yes, for the Baths.

ASL. Quite so, I understand. Well, I have come to say that I will back that up by every means in my power.

HOV. [*to the* DOCTOR]. You see!

DR. STO. I shall be very grateful to you, but—

ASL. Because it may be no bad thing to have us small tradesmen at your back. We form, as it were, a compact majority in the town—if we choose. And it is always a good thing to have the majority with you, Doctor.

DR. STO. That is undeniably true; but I confess I don't see why such unusual precautions should be necessary in this case. It seems to me that such a plain, straightforward thing—

ASL. Oh, it may be very desirable, all the same. I know our local authorities so well; officials are not generally very ready to act on proposals that come from other people. That is why I think it would not be at all amiss it we made a little demonstration.

HOV. That's right.

DR. STO. Demonstration, did you say? What on earth are you going to make a demonstration about?

ASL. We shall proceed with the greatest moderation, Doctor. Moderation is always my aim; it is the great-

est virtue in a citizen—at least I thin so.

DR. STO. It is well known to be characteristic of yours, Mr. Aslaksen.

ASL. Yes, I think I may pride m self on that. And this matter of t water-supply is of the greatest impo tance to us small tradesmen. T Baths promise to be a regular gol mine for the town. We shall all mak our living out of them, especially tho of us who are householders. That why we will back up the project strongly as possible. And as I am present Chairman of the Householder Association—

DR. STO. Yes—?

ASL. And, what is more, local secr tary of the Temperance Society—yo know, sir, I suppose, that I am worker in the temperance cause?

DR. STO. Of course, of course.

ASL. Well, you can understand th I come into contact with a great man people. And as I have the reputatio of a temperate and law-abiding citize —like yourself, Doctor—I have a ce tain influence in the town, a little b of power, if I may be allowed to s so.

DR. STO. I know that quite well, M Aslaksen.

ASL. So you see it would be an eas matter for me to set on foot some test monial, if necessary.

DR. STO. A testimonial?

ASL. Yes, some kind of an addre of thanks from the townsmen for yo share in a matter of such importan to the community. I need scarcely s that it would have to be drawn up wi the greatest regard to moderation, as not to offend the authorities—wh after all, have the reins in their hand

we pay strict attention to that, no
ne can take it amiss, I should think!

Hov. Well, and even supposing they
dn't like it—

Asl. No, no, no; there must be no
scourtesy to the authorities, Mr. Hov-
ad. It is no use falling foul of those
pon whom our welfare so closely de-
ends. I have done that in my time,
nd no good ever comes of it. But no
ne can take exception to a reasonable
nd frank expression of a citizen's
ews.

Dr. Sto. [*shaking him by the hand*].
can't tell you, dear Mr. Aslaksen, how
xtremely pleased I am to find such
earty support among my fellow-citi-
ens. I am delighted—delighted! Now,
ou will take a small glass of sherry,
?

Asl. No, thank you; I never drink
cohol of that kind.

Dr. Sto. Well, what do you say to
glass of beer, then?

Asl. Nor that either, thank you,
octor. I never drink anything as
rly as this. I am going into town
ow to talk over with one or two
ouseholders, and prepare the ground.

Dr. Sto. It is tremendously kind of
ou, Mr. Aslaksen; but I really cannot
nderstand the necessity for all these
recautions. It seems to me that the
ing should go of itself.

Asl. The authorities are somewhat
ow to move, Doctor. Far be it from
e to seem to blame them—

Hov. We are going to stir them up
the paper to-morrow, Aslaksen.

Asl. But not violently, I trust, Mr.
ovstad. Proceed with moderation, or
ou will do nothing with them. You
ay take my advice; I have gathered
y experience in the school of life.
Well, I must say good-bye, Doctor. You know now that we small tradesmen are at your back at all events, like a solid wall. You have the compact majority on your side, Doctor.

Dr. Sto. I am very much obliged, dear Mr. Aslaksen. [*Shakes hands with him.*] Good-bye, good-bye.

Asl. Are you going my way, towards the printing-office, Mr. Hovstad?

Hov. I will come later; I have something to settle up first.

Asl. Very well. [*Bows and goes out;* Stockmann *follows him into the hall.*]

Hov. [*as* Stockmann *comes in again*]. Well, what do you think of that, Doctor? Don't you think it is high time we stirred a little life into all this slackness and vacillation and cowardice?

Dr. Sto. Are you referring to Aslaksen?

Hov. Yes, I am. He is one of those who are floundering in a bog—decent enough fellow though he may be, otherwise. And most of the people here are in just the same case—see-sawing and edging first to one side and then to the other, so overcome with caution and scruple that they never dare to take any decided step.

Dr. Sto. Yes, but Aslaksen seemed to me so thoroughly well-intentioned.

Hov. There is one thing I esteem higher than that; and that is for a man to be self-reliant and sure of himself.

Dr. Sto. I think you are perfectly right there.

Hov. That is why I want to seize this opportunity, and try if I cannot manage to put a little virility into these well-intentioned people for once. The

idol of Authority must be shattered in this town. This gross and inexcusable blunder about the water-supply must be brought home to the mind of every municipal voter.

Dr. Sto. Very well; if you are of opinion that it is for the good of the community, so be it. But not until I have had a talk with my brother.

Hov. Anyway, I will get a leading article ready; and if the Mayor refuses to take the matter up—

Dr. Sto. How can you suppose such a thing possible?

Hov. It is conceivable. And in that case—

Dr. Sto. In that case I promise you —. Look here, in that case you may print my report—every word of it.

Hov. May I? Have I your word for it?

Dr. Sto. [*giving him the MS.*]. Here it is; take it with you. It can do no harm for you to read it through, and you can give it me back later on.

Hov. Good, good! That is what I will do. And now good-bye, Doctor.

Dr. Sto. Good-bye, good-bye. You will see everything will run quite smoothly, Mr. Hovstad—quite smoothly.

Hov. Hm!—we shall see. [*Bows and goes out.*]

Dr. Sto. [*opens the dining-room door and looks in*]. Katherine! Oh, you are back, Petra?

Petra [*coming in*]. Yes, I have just come from the school.

Mrs. Sto. [*coming in*]. Has he not been here yet?

Dr. Sto. Peter? No. But I have had a long talk with Hovstad. He is quite excited about my discovery. I find it has a much wider bearing than I at first imagined. And he has pu his paper at my disposal if necessit should arise.

Mrs. Sto. Do you think it will?

Dr. Sto. Not for a moment. Bu at all events it makes me feel proud t know that I have the liberal-minde independent press on my side. Ye and—just imagine—I have had a visi from the Chairman of the Household ers' Association!

Mrs. Sto. Oh! What did he want

Dr. Sto. To offer me his suppor too. They will support me in a bod if it should be necessary. Katherine— do you know what I have got behin me?

Mrs. Sto. Behind you? No, wha have you got behind you?

Dr. Sto. The compact majority.

Mrs. Sto. Really? Is that a goo thing for you, Thomas?

Dr. Sto. I should think it was good thing. [*Walks up and down rub bing his hands*]. By Jove, it's a fin thing to feel this bond of brotherhoo between oneself and one's fellow cit zens!

Petra. And to be able to do s much that is good and useful, father

Dr. Sto. And for one's own nativ town into the bargain, my child!

Mrs. Sto. That was a ring at th bell.

Dr. Sto. It must be he, then. [*knock is heard at the door.*] Come in

Peter [*comes in from the hall*] Good morning.

Dr. Sto. Glad to see you, Peter!

Mrs. Sto. Good morning, Pete How are you?

Peter. So so, thank you. [*To* D Stockmann.] I received from you ye terday, after office hours, a report dea

ıg with the condition of the water at ıe Baths.

Dr. Sto. Yes. Have you read it?

Peter. Yes, I have.

Dr. Sto. And what have you to say) it?

Peter [*with a sidelong glance.*] m!—

Mrs. Sto. Come along, Petra. [*She nd* Petra *go into the room on the ft.*]

Peter [*after a pause*]. Was it neces- ary to make all these investigations ehind my back?

Dr. Sto. Yes, because until I was bsolutely certain about it—

Peter. Then you mean that you are bsolutely certain now?

Dr. Sto. Surely you are convinced f that.

Peter. Is it your intention to bring is document before the Baths Com- ittee as a sort of official communica- on?

Dr. Sto. Certainly. Something ust be done in the matter—and that uickly.

Peter. As usual, you employ violent xpressions in your report. You say, nongst other things, that what we fer visitors in our Baths is a perma- ent supply of poison.

Dr. Sto. Well, can you describe it ıy other way, Peter? Just think— ater that is poisonous, whether you rink it or bathe in it! And this we fer to the poor sick folk who come us trustfully and pay us at an ex- bitant rate to be made well again!

Peter. And your reasoning leads u to this conclusion, that we must ild a sewer to draw off the alleged purities from Mölledal and must ay the water-conduits.

Dr. Sto. Yes. Do you see any other way out of it? I don't.

Peter. I made a pretext this morning to go and see the town engineer, and, as if only half seriously, broached the subject of these proposals as a thing we might perhaps have to take under consideration some time later on.

Dr. Sto. Some time later on!

Peter. He smiled at what he considered to be my extravagance, naturally. Have you taken the trouble to consider what your proposed alterations would cost? According to the information I obtained, the expenses would probably mount up to fifteen or twenty thousand pounds.

Dr. Sto. Would it cost so much?

Peter. Yes; and the worst part of it would be that the work would take at least two years.

Dr. Sto. Two years? Two whole years?

Peter. At least. And what are we to with the Baths in the meantime? Close them? Indeed we should be obliged to. And do you suppose any one would come near the place after it had got about that the water was dangerous?

Dr. Sto. Yes, but, Peter, that is what it is.

Peter. And all this at this juncture—just as the Baths are beginning to be known. There are other towns in the neighborhood with qualifications to attract visitors for bathing purposes. Don't you suppose they would immediately strain every nerve to divert the entire stream of strangers to themselves? Unquestionably they would; and then where should we be? We should probably have to

abandon the whole thing, which has cost us so much money—and then you would have ruined your native town.

DR. STO. I—should have ruined—!

PETER. It is simply and solely through the Baths that the town has before it any future worth mentioning. You know that just as well as I.

DR. STO. But what do you think ought to be done, then?

PETER. Your report has not convinced me that the condition of the water at the Baths is as bad as you represent it to be.

DR. STO. I tell you it is even worse!—or at all events it will be in summer, when the warm weather comes.

PETER. As I said, I believe you exaggerate the matter considerably. A capable physician ought to know what measures to take—he ought to be capable of preventing injurious influences or of remedying them if they become obviously persistent.

DR. STO. Well? What more?

PETER. The water supply for the Baths is now an established fact, and in consequence must be treated as such. But probably the Committee, at its discretion, will not be disinclined to consider the question of how far it might be possible to introduce certain improvements consistently with a reasonable expenditure.

DR. STO. And do you suppose that I will have anything to do with such a piece of trickery as that?

PETER. Trickery!!

DR. STO. Yes, it would be a trick—a fraud, a lie, a downright crime towards the public, towards the whole community!

PETER. I have not, as I remarked before, been able to convince myself that there is actually any imminent danger.

DR. STO. You have! It is impossible that you should not be convinced. I know I have represented the facts absolutely truthfully and fairly. And you know it very well, Peter, only you won't acknowledge it. It was owing to your action that both the Baths and the water-conduits were built where they are; and that is what you won't acknowledge—that damnable blunder of yours. Pooh!—do you suppose I don't see through you?

PETER. And even if that were true. If I perhaps guard my reputation somewhat anxiously, it is in the interests of the town. Without moral authority I am powerless to direct public affairs as seems, to my judgment, to be best for the common good. And on that account—and for various other reasons too—it appears to me to be a matter of importance that your report should not be delivered to the Committee. In the interests of the public, you must withhold it. Then, later on, I will raise the question and we will do our best, privately, but nothing of this unfortunate affair—not a single word of it—must come to the ears of the public.

DR. STO. I am afraid you will not be able to prevent that now, my dear Peter.

PETER. It must and shall be prevented.

DR. STO. It is no use, I tell you. There are too many people that know about it.

PETER. That know about it? Who? Surely you don't mean those fellows on the "People's Messenger"?

Dr. Sto. Yes, they know. The
eral-minded independent press is
ing to see that you do your duty.
Peter [*after a short pause*]. You
e an extraordinarily independent
an, Thomas. Have you given no
ought to the consequences this may
ve for yourself?
Dr. Sto. Consequences?—for me?
Peter. For you and yours, yes.
Dr. Sto. What the deuce do you
ean?
Peter. I believe I have always be-
ved in a brotherly way to you—
ve always been ready to oblige or
help you?
Dr. Sto. Yes, you have, and I am
ateful to you for it.
Peter. There is no need. Indeed,
some extent I was forced to do so
for my own sake. I always hoped
at, if I helped to improve your
ancial position, I should be able to
ep some check on you.
Dr. Sto. What!! Then it was
ly for your own sake—!
Peter. Up to a certain point, yes.
is painful for a man in an official
sition to have his nearest relative
mpromising himself time after time.
Dr. Sto. And do you consider that
lo that?
Peter. Yes, unfortunately, you do,
thout even being aware of it. You
ve a restless, pugnacious, rebellious
position. And then there is that
astrous propensity of yours to
nt to write about every sort of
ssible and impossible thing. The
ment an idea comes into your head,
u must needs go and write a news-
per article or a whole pamphlet
ut it.
Dr. Sto. Well, but is it not the
duty of a citizen to let the public share in any new ideas he may have?

Peter. Oh, the public doesn't require any new ideas. The public is best served by the good, old-established ideas it already has.

Dr. Sto. And that is your honest opinion?

Peter. Yes, and for once I must talk frankly to you. Hitherto I have tried to avoid doing so, because I know how irritable you are; but now I must tell you the truth, Thomas. You have no conception what an amount of harm you do yourself by your impetuosity. You complain of the authorities, you even complain of the government—you are always pulling them to pieces; you insist that you have been neglected and persecuted. But what else can such a cantankerous man as you expect?

Dr. Sto. What next? Cantankerous, am I?

Peter. Yes, Thomas, you are an extremely cantankerous man to work with—I know that to my cost. You disregard everything that you ought to have consideration for. You seem completely to forget that it is me you have to thank for your appointment here as medical officer to the Baths.—

Dr. Sto. I was entitled to it as a matter of course!—I and nobody else! I was the first person to see that the town could be made into a flourishing wateringplace, and I was the only one who saw it at that time. I had to fight single-handed in support of the idea for many years; and I wrote and wrote—

Peter. Undoubtedly. But things were not ripe for the scheme then—though, of course, you could not judge

of that in your out-of-the-way corner up north. But as soon as the opportune moment came I—and the others—took the matter into our hands—

DR. STO. Yes, and made this mess of all my beautiful plan. It is pretty obvious now what clever fellows you were!

PETER. To my mind the whole thing only seems to mean that you are seeking another outlet for your combativeness. You want to pick a quarrel with your superiors—an old habit of yours. You cannot put up with any authority over you. You look askance at anyone who occupies a superior official position; you regard him as a personal enemy, and then any stick is good enough to beat him with. But now I have called your attention to the fact that the town's interests are at stake—and, incidentally, my own too. And therefore I must tell you, Thomas, that you will find me inexorable with regard to what I am about to require you to do.

DR. STO. And what is that?

PETER. As you have been so indiscreet as to speak of this delicate matter to outsiders, despite the fact that you ought to have treated it as entirely official and confidential, it is obviously impossible to hush it up now. All sorts of rumours will get about directly, and everybody who has a grudge against us will take care to embellish these rumours. So it will be necessary for you to refute them publicly.

DR. STO. I! How? I don't understand.

PETER. What we shall expect is that, after making further investigations, you will come to the conclusion that the matter is not by any means as dangerous or as critical as you imagined in the first instance.

DR. STO. Oho!—so that is what you expect!

PETER. And, what is more, we shall expect you to make public profession of your confidence in the Committee and in their readiness to consider fully and conscientiously what steps may be necessary to remedy any possible defects.

DR. STO. But you will never be able to do that by patching and tinkering at it—never! Take my word for it, Peter; I mean what I say, as deliberately and emphatically as possible.

PETER. As an officer under the Committee, you have no right to any individual opinion.

DR. STO. [*amazed*]. No right?

PETER. In your official capacity—no. As a private person, it is quite another matter. But as a subordinate member of the staff of the Baths, you have no right to express any opinion which runs contrary to that of your superiors.

DR. STO. This is too much! I, a doctor, a man of science, have no right to—!

PETER. The matter in hand is not simply a scientific one. It is a complicated matter, and has its economic as well as its technical side.

DR. STO. I don't care what it is! I intend to be free to express my opinion on any subject under the sun.

PETER. As you please—but not on any subject concerning the Baths. That we forbid.

DR. STO. [*shouting*]. You forbid—You! A pack of—

PETER. *I* forbid it—I, your chief; d if I forbid it, you have to obey.

DR. STO. [*controlling himself*]. ıer—if you were not my brother—

PETRA [*throwing open the door*]. ıther, you shan't stand this!

MRS. STO. [*coming in after her*]. tra, Petra!

PETER. Oh, so you have been eaves- ɔpping.

MRS. STO. You were talking so ıd, we couldn't help—

PETRA. Yes, I was listening.

PETER. Well, after all, I am very ıd—

DR. STO. [*going up to him*]. You re saying something about forbid- ıg and obeying?

PETER. You obliged me to take that ıe with you.

DR. STO. And so I am to give my- f the lie, publicly?

PETER. We consider it absolutely ɔessary that you should make some blic statement as I have asked for.

DR. STO. And if I do not—obey?

PETER. Then we shall publish a tement ourselves to reassure the blic.

DR. STO. Very well; but in that se I shall use my pen against you. stick to what I have said; I will ɔw that I am right and that you are ong. And what will you do then?

PETER. Then I shall not be able to ɛvent your being dismissed.

DR. STO. What—?

PETRA. Father—dismissed!

MRS. STO. Dismissed!

PETER. Dismissed from the staff of Baths. I shall be obliged to pro- se that you shall immediately be en notice, and shall not be allowed any further participation in the Baths' affairs.

DR. STO. You would dare to do that!

PETER. It is you that are playing the daring game.

PETRA. Uncle, that is a shameful way to treat a man like father!

MRS. STO. Do hold your tongue, Petra!

PETER [*looking at* PETRA]. Oh, so we volunteer our opinions already, do we? Of course. [*To* MRS. STOCKMANN.] Katherine, I imagine you are the most sensible person in this house. Use any influence you may have over your husband, and make him see what this will entail for his family as well as—

DR. STO. My family is my own concern and nobody else's!

PETER. —for his own family, as I was saying, as well as for the town he lives in.

DR. STO. It is I who have the real good of the town at heart! I want to lay bare the defects that sooner or later must come to the light of day. I will show whether I love my native town.

PETER. You, who in your blind obstinacy want to cut off the most important source of the town's welfare?

DR. STO. The source is poisoned, man! Are you mad? We are making our living by retailing filth and corruption! The whole of our flourishing municipal life derives its sustenance from a lie!

PETER. All imagination—or something even worse. The man who can throw out such offensive insinuations about his native town must be an enemy to our community.

DR. STO. [*going up to him*]. Do you dare to—!

MRS. STO. [*throwing herself between them*]. Thomas!

PETRA [*catching her father by the arm*]. Don't lose your temper, father!

PETER. I will not expose myself to violence. Now you have had a warning; so reflect on what you owe to yourself and your family. Good-bye. [*Goes out.*]

DR. STO. [*walking up and down*]. Am I to put up with such treatment as this? In my own house, Katherine! What do you think of that!

MRS. STO. Indeed it is both shameful and absurd Thomas—

PETRA. If only I could give uncle a piece of my mind—

DR. STO. It is my own fault. I ought to have flown out at him long ago!—shown my teeth!—bitten! To hear him call me an enemy to our community! Me! I shall not take that lying down, upon my soul!

MRS. STO. But, dear Thomas, your brother has power on his side—

DR. STO. Yes, but I have right on mine, I tell you.

MRS. STO. Oh! yes, right—right. What is the use of having right on your side if you have not got might?

PETRA. Oh, mother!—how can you say such a thing!

DR. STO. Do you imagine that in a free country it is no use having right on your side? You are absurd, Katherine. Besides, haven't I got the liberal-minded, independent press to lead the way, and the compact majority behind me? That is might enough, I should think!

MRS. STO. But, good heavens, Thomas, you don't mean to—?

DR. STO. Don't mean to what?

MRS. STO. To set yourself up in o position to your brother.

DR. STO. In God's name, what el do you suppose I should do but ta my stand on right and truth?

PETRA. Yes, I was just going to s that.

MRS. STO. But it won't do you a earthly good. If they won't do it, th won't.

DR. STO. Oho, Katherine! Just gi me time, and you will see how I w carry the war into their camp.

MRS. STO. Yes, you carry the w into their camp, and you get your di missal—that is what you will do.

DR. STO. In any case I shall ha done my duty towards the public—t wards the community. I, who a called its enemy!

MRS. STO. But towards your famil Thomas? Towards your own hom Do you think that is doing your du towards those you have to provide fo

PETRA. Ah, don't think always fi of us, mother.

MRS. STO. Oh, it is easy for you talk; you are able to shift for yoursel if need be. But remember the boy Thomas; and think a little too of you self, and of me—

DR. STO. I think you are out of yo senses, Katherine! If I were to be su a miserable coward as to go on n knees to Peter and his damned cre do you suppose I should ever know a hour's peace of mind all my life afte wards?

MRS. STO. I don't know anythin about that; but God preserve us fro the peace of mind we shall have, all t same, if you go on defying him! Y will find yourself again without t means of subsistence, with no income

nt upon. I should think we had had ough of that in the old days. Re- mber that, Thomas; think what that ans.

DR. STO. [*collecting himself with a uggle and clenching his fists*]. And is what this slavery can bring upon ree, honourable man! Isn't it hor- e, Katherine?

MRS. STO. Yes, it is sinful to treat so, it is perfectly true. But, good vens, one has to put up with so ch injustice in this world.—There the boys, Thomas! Look at them! at is to become of them? Oh, no, you can never have the heart—.

LIF *and* MORTEN *have come in while was speaking, with their school ks in their hands*].

DR. STO. The boys—! [*Recovers self suddenly.*] No, even if the ole world goes to pieces, I will never my neck to this yoke! [*Goes to- rds his room.*]

MRS. STO. [*following him*]. Thomas what are you going to do!

DR. STO. [*at his door*]. I mean to e the right to look my sons in the e when they are grown men. [*Goes his room.*]

MRS. STO. [*bursting into tears*]. God us all!

PETRA. Father is splendid! He will give in.

The boys look on in amazement; TRA *signs to them not to speak!*

ACT III

SCENE—*The editorial office of the eople's Messenger." The entrance r is on the left-hand side of the k wall; on the right-hand side is an- er door with glass panels through ich the printing-room can be seen. other door in the right-hand wall. In the middle of the room is a large table covered with papers, newspapers and books. In the foreground on the left a window, before which stand a desk and a high stool. There are a couple of easy chairs by the table, and other chairs standing along the wall. The room is dingy and uncomfortable; the furniture is old, the chairs stained and torn. In the printing-room the compositors are seen at work, and a printer is working a hand-press.* HOVSTAD *is sitting at the desk, writing.* BILLING *comes in from the right with* DR. STOCKMANN'S *manuscript in his hand.*

BILL. Well, I must say!

HOV. [*still writing*]. Have you read it through?

BILL. [*laying the MS. on the desk.*] Yes, indeed I have.

HOV. Don't you think the Doctor hits them pretty hard?

BILL. Hard? Bless my soul, he's crushing! Every word falls like—how shall I put it?—like the blow of a sledgehammer.

HOV. Yes, but they are not the people to throw up the sponge at the first blow.

BILL. That is true; and for that reason we must strike blow upon blow until the whole of this aristocracy tumbles to pieces. As I sat in there reading this, I almost seemed to see a revolution in being.

HOV. [*turning round*]. Hush!—Speak so that Aslaksen cannot hear you.

BILL. [*lowering his voice*]. Aslaksen is a chicken-hearted chap, a coward; there is nothing of the man in him. But this time you will insist on your own way, won't you? You will put the Doctor's article in?

HOV. Yes, and if the Mayor doesn't like it—

BILL. That will be the devil of a nuisance.

HOV. Well, fortunately we can turn the situation to good account, whatever happens. If the Mayor will not fall in with the Doctor's project, he will have all the small tradesmen down on him—the whole of the Householders' Association and the rest of them. And if he does fall in with it, he will fall out with the whole crowd of large shareholders in the Baths, who up to now have been his most valuable supporters—

BILL. Yes, because they will certainly have to fork out a pretty penny—

HOV. Yes, you may be sure they will. And in this way the ring will be broken up, you see, and then in every issue of the paper we will enlighten the public on the Mayor's incapability on one point and another, and make it clear that all the positions of trust in the town, the whole control of municipal affairs, ought to be put in the hands of the Liberals.

BILL. That is perfectly true! I see it coming—I see it coming; we are on the threshold of a revolution!

[*A knock is heard at the door.*]

HOV. Hush! [*Calls out.*] Come in! [DR. STOCKMANN *comes in by the street door.* HOVSTAD *goes to meet him.*] Ah, it is you, Doctor! Well?

DR. STO. You may set to work and print it, Mr. Hovstad!

HOV. Has it come to that, then?

BILL. Hurrah!

DR. STO. Yes, print away. Undoubtedly it has come to that. Now they must take what they get. There is going to be a fight in the town, Mr. Bi ing!

BILL. War to the knife, I hope! W will get our knives to their throa Doctor!

DR. STO. This article is only a b ginning. I have already got four five more sketched out in my hea Where is Aslaksen?

BILL. [*calls into the printing-room* Aslaksen, just come here for a minut

HOV. Four or five more articles, d you say? On the same subject?

DR. STO. No—far from it, my de fellow. No, they are about quite a other matter. But they all spring fro the question of the water-supply a the drainage. One thing leads to a other, you know. It is like beginni to pull down an old house, exactly.

BILL. Upon my soul, it's true; y find you are not done till you ha pulled all the old rubbish down.

ASL. [*coming in*]. Pulled dow You are not thinking of pulling do the Baths surely, Doctor?

HOV. Far from it, don't be afra

DR. STO. No, we meant somethi quite different. Well, what do y think of my article, Mr. Hovstad?

HOV. I think it is simply a maste piece—

DR. STO. Do you really think s Well, I am very pleased, very pleas

HOV. It is so clear and intelligib One need have no special knowledge understand the bearing of it. You w have every enlightened man on yo side.

ASL. And every prudent man too, hope?

BILL. The prudent and the impr dent—almost the whole town.

Asl. In that case we may venture print it.

Dr. Sto. I should think so!

Hov. We will put it in to-morrow rning.

Dr. Sto. Of course—you must not e a single day. What I wanted to x you, Mr. Aslaksen, was if you uld supervise the printing of it your- f.

Asl. With pleasure.

Dr. Sto. Take care of it as if it re a treasure! No misprints—every rd is important. I will look in again ittle later; perhaps you will be able let me see a proof. I can't tell you w eager I am to see it in print, and it burst upon the public—

Bill. Burst upon them—yes, like a h of lightning!

Dr. Sto. —and to have it submitted the judgment of my intelligent low-townsmen. You cannot imagine at I have gone through to-day. I ve been threatened first with one ng and then with another; they have d to rob me of my most elementary hts as a man—

Bill. What! Your rights as a man!

Dr. Sto. —they have tried to de- de me, to make a coward of me, to ce me to put personal interests ore my most sacred convictions—

Bill. That is too much—I'm damned t isn't.

Hov. Oh, you mustn't be surprised nything from that quarter.

Dr. Sto. Well, they will get the st of it with me; they may assure nselves of that. I shall consider "People's Messenger" my sheet- hor now, and every single day I bombard them with one article r another, like bomb-shells—

Asl. Yes, but—

Bill. Hurrah!—it is war, it is war!

Dr. Sto. I shall smite them to the ground—I shall crush them—I shall break down all their defences, before the eyes of the honest public! That is what I shall do!

Asl. Yes, but in moderation, Doctor —proceed with moderation—

Bill. Not a bit of it, not a bit of it! Don't spare the dynamite!

Dr. Sto. Because it is not merely a question of water-supply and drains now, you know. No—it is the whole of our social life that we have got to purify and disinfect—

Bill. Spoken like a deliverer!

Dr. Sto. All the incapables must be turned out, you understand—and that in every walk of life! Endless vistas have opened themselves to my mind's eye to-day. I cannot see it all quite clearly yet, but I shall in time. Young and vigorous standard-bearers—those are what we need and must seek, my friends; we must have new men in command at all our outposts.

Bill. Hear, hear!

Dr. Sto. We only need to stand by one another, and it will all be perfectly easy. The revolution will be launched like a ship that runs smoothly off the stocks. Don't you think so?

Hov. For my part I think we have now a prospect of getting the municipal authority into the hands where it should lie.

Asl. And if only we proceed with moderation, I cannot imagine that there will be any risk.

Dr. Sto. Who the devil cares whether there is any risk or not! What I am doing, I am doing in the name of

truth and for the sake of my conscience.

Hov. You are a man who deserves to be supported, Doctor.

Asl. Yes, there is no denying that the Doctor is a true friend to the town —a real friend to the community, that he is.

Bill. Take my word for it, Aslaken, Dr. Stockman is a friend of the people.

Asl. I fancy the Householders' Association will make use of that expression before long.

Dr. Sto. [*affected, grasps their hands*]. Thank you, thank you, my dear staunch friends. It is very refreshing to me to hear you say that; my brother called me something quite different. By Jove, he shall have it back, with interest! But now I must be off to see a poor devil—. I will come back, as I said. Keep a very careful eye on the manuscript, Aslaksen, and don't for worlds leave out any of my notes of exclamation! Rather put one or two more in! Capital, capital! Well, good-bye for the present— good-bye, good-bye!

[*They show him to the door, and bow him out.*]

Hov. He may prove an invaluably useful man to us.

Asl. Yes, so long as he confines himself to this matter of the Baths. But if he goes farther afield, I don't think it would be advisable to follow him.

Hov. Hm!—that all depends—

Bill. You are so infernally timid, Aslaken!

Asl. Timid? Yes, when it is a question of the local authorities, I am timid, Mr. Billing; it is a lesson I have learnt in the school of experience, let me tell you. But try me in higher politi in matters that concern the governme itself, and then see if I am timid.

Bill. No, you aren't, I admit. B this is simply contradicting yourse

Asl. I am a man with a conscien and that is the whole matter. If y attack the government, you don't the community any harm, anywa those fellows pay no attention to tacks, you see—they go on just as th are in spite of them. But *local* autho ties are different; they *can* be turn out, and then perhaps you may get ignorant lot into office who may do reparable harm to the household and everybody else.

Hov. But what of the education citizens by self government—don't y attach any importance to that?

Asl. When a man has interests his own to protect, he cannot th of everything, Mr. Hovstad.

Hov. Then I hope I shall never h interests of my own to protect!

Bill. Hear, hear!

Asl. [*with a smile*]. Hm! [*Poi to the desk.*] Mr. Sheriff Stensga was your predecessor at that editor desk.

Bill. [*spitting*]. Bah! That tu coat.

Hov. I am not a weathercock—a never will be.

Asl. A politician should never too certain of anything, Mr. Hovst And as for you, Mr. Billing, I sho think it is time for you to be taking a reef or two in your sails, seeing t you are applying for the post of retary to the Bench.

Bill. I—!

Hov. Are you, Billing?

ILL. Well, yes—but you must clear-
understand I am doing it only to
oy the bigwigs.
ASL. Anyhow, it is no business of
e. But if I am to be accused of
idity and of inconsistency in my
nciples, this is what I want to point
: my political past is an open book.
ave never changed, except perhaps
become a little more moderate, you
. My heart is still with the people;
I don't deny that my reason has a
tain bias towards the authorities—
local ones, I mean. [*Goes into the
nting-room.*]
BILL. Oughtn't we to try and get
of him, Hovstad?
HOV. Do you know anyone else who
l advance the money for our paper
l printing bill?
BILL. It is an infernal nuisance that
don't possess some capital to trade

HOV. [*sitting down at his desk*]. Yes,
we only had that, then—
BILL. Suppose you were to apply
Dr. Stockmann?
HOV. [*turning over some papers*].
at is the use? He has got nothing.
BILL. No, but he has got a warm
in the background, old Morten
—"the Badger," as they call him.
HOV. [*writing*]. Are you so sure *he*
got anything?
ILL. Good Lord, of course he has!
some of it must come to the Stock-
ns. Most probably he will do some-
g for the children, at all events.
OV. [*turning half round*]. Are you
ting on that?
ILL. Counting on it? Of course I
not counting on anything.
OV. That is right. And I should
count on the secretaryship to the
Bench either, if I were you; for I can assure you—you won't get it.

BILL. Do you think I am not quite aware of that? My object is precisely *not* to get it. A slight of that kind stimulates a man's fighting power—it is like getting a supply of fresh bile—and I am sure one needs that badly enough in a hole-and-corner place like this, where it is so seldom anything happens to stir one up.

HOV. [*writing*]. Quite so, quite so.

BILL. Ah, I shall be heard of yet!—Now I shall go and write the appeal to the Householders' Association. [*Goes into the room on the right.*]

HOV. [*sitting at his desk, biting his penholder, says slowly*]. Hm!—that's it, is it? [*A knock is heard.*] Come in! [PETRA *comes in by the outer door.* HOVSTAD *gets up.*] What you!—here?

PETRA. Yes, you must forgive me—

HOV. [*pulling a chair forward*]. Won't you sit down?

PETRA. No, thank you; I must go again in a moment.

HOV. Have you come with a message from your father, by any chance?

PETRA. No, I have come on my own account. [*Takes a book out of her coat pocket.*] Here is the English story.

HOV. Why have you brought it back?

PETRA. Because I am not going to translate it.

HOV. But you promised me faithfully—

PETRA. Yes, but then I had not read it. I don't suppose you have read it either?

HOV. No, you know quite well I don't understand English; but—

PETRA. Quite so. That is why I wanted to tell you that you must find

something else. [*Lays the book on the table.*] You can't use this for the "People's Messenger."

HOV. Why not?

PETRA. Because it conflicts with all your opinions.

HOV. Oh, for that matter—

PETRA. You don't understand me. The burden of this story is that there is a supernatural power that looks after the so-called good people in this world and makes everything happen for the best in their case—while all the so-called bad people are punished.

HOV. Well, but that is all right. That is just what our readers want.

PETRA. And are you going to be the one to give it to them? For myself, I do not believe a word of it. You know quite well that things do not happen so in reality.

HOV. You are perfectly right; but an editor cannot always act as he would prefer. He is often obliged to bow to the wishes of the public in unimportant matters. Politics are the most important thing in life—for a newspaper, anyway; and if I want to carry my public with me on the path that leads to liberty and progress, I must not frightem them away. If they find a moral tale of this sort in the serial at the bottom of the page, they will be all the more ready to read what is printed above it; they feel more secure, as it were.

PETRA. For shame! You would never go and set a snare like that for your readers; you are not a spider!

HOV. [*smiling*]. Thank you for having such a good opinion of me. No; as a matter of fact that is Billing's idea and not mine.

PETRA. Billing's!

HOV. Yes; anyway he propound that theory here one day. And it Billings who is so anxious to ha that story in the paper; I don't kn anything about the book.

PETRA. But how can Billing, w his emancipated views—

HOV. Oh, Billing is a many-sid man. He is applying for the post secretary to the Bench, too, I hear.

PETRA. I don't believe it, Mr. H stad. How could he possibly br himself to do such a thing?

HOV. Ah, you must ask him th

PETRA. I should never have thou it of him.

HOV. [*looking more closely at he* No? Does it really surprise you much?

PETRA. Yes. Or perhaps not a gether. Really, I don't quite know—

HOV. We journalists are not m worth, Miss Stockmann.

PETRA. Do you really mean that

HOV. I think so sometimes.

PETRA. Yes, in the ordinary aff of everyday life, perhaps; I can und stand that. But now, when you h taken a weighty matter in hand—

HOV. This matter of your fathe you mean?

PETRA. Exactly. It seems to me now you must feel you are a worth more than most.

HOV. Yes, to-day I do feel so thing of that sort.

PETRA. Of course you do, don't y It is a splendid vocation you h chosen—to smooth the way for march of unappreciated truths, new and courageous lines of thou If it were nothing more than bec you stand fearlessly in the open take up the cause of an injured ma

Hov. Especially when that injured
an is—ahem!—I don't rightly know
w to—

Petra. When that man is so upright
d so honest, you mean?

Hov. [*more gently*]. Especially when
e is your father, I meant.

Petra [*suddenly checked*]. *That?*

Hov. Yes, Petra—Miss Petra.

Petra. Is it *that*, that is first and
remost with you? Not the matter
elf? Not the truth?—not my father's
g generous heart?

Hov. Certainly — of course — that
o.

Petra. No, thank you; you have be-
ayed yourself, Mr. Hovstad, and now
shall never trust you again in any-
ing.

Hov. Can you really take it so
niss in me that it is mostly for your
ke—?

Petra. What I am angry with you
r, is for not having been honest with
y father. You talked to him as if
e truth and the good of the com-
unity were what lay nearest to your
art. You have made fools of both
y father and me. You are not the
an you made yourself out to be. And
at I shall never forgive you—never!

Hov. You ought not to speak so
tterly, Miss Petra—least of all now.

Petra. Why not now especially?

Hov. Because your father cannot
without my help.

Petra [*looking him up and down*].
re you that sort of man too? For
ame!

Hov. No, no, I am not. This came
on me so unexpectedly—you must
lieve that.

Petra. I know what to believe.
od-bye.

Asl. [*coming from the printing-room, hurriedly and with an air of mystery*]. Damnation, Hovstad!—[*Sees* Petra.] Oh, this is awkward—

Petra. There is the book; you must give it to some one else. [*Goes towards the door.*]

Hov. [*following her*]. But, Miss Stockmann—

Petra. Good-bye. [*Goes out.*]

Asl. I say—Mr. Hovstad—

Hov. Well, well!—what is it?

Asl. The Mayor is outside in the printing-room.

Hov. The Mayor, did you say?

Asl. Yes, he wants to speak to you. He came in by the back door—didn't want to be seen, you understand.

Hov. What can he want? Wait a bit—I will go myself. [*Goes to the door of the printing-room, opens it, bows and invites* Peter Stockmann *in.*] Just see, Aslaksen, that no one—

Asl. Quite so. [*Goes into the printing-room.*]

Peter. You did not expect to see me here, Mr. Hovstad?

Hov. No, I confess I did not.

Peter [*looking round*]. You are very snug in here—very nice indeed.

Hov. Oh—

Peter. And here I come, without any notice, to take up your time!

Hov. By all means, Mr. Mayor. I am at your service. But let me relieve you of your— [*takes* Stockmann's *hat and stick and puts them on a chair*]. Won't you sit down?

Peter [*sitting down by the table*]. Thank you. [Hovstad *sits down.*] I have had an extremely annoying experience to-day, Mr. Hovstad.

Hov. Really? Ah! well, I expect

with all the various business you have to attend to—

PETER. The Medical Officer of the Baths is responsible for what happened to-day.

HOV. Indeed? The Doctor?

PETER. He has addressed a kind of report to the Baths Committee on the subject of certain supposed defects in the Baths.

HOV. Has he indeed?

PETER. Yes—has he not told you? I thought he said—

HOV. Ah, yes—it is true he did mention something about—

ASL. [*coming from the printing-room*]. I ought to have that copy—

HOV. [*angrily*]. Ahem!—there it is on the desk.

ASL. [*taking it*]. Right.

PETER. But look there—that is the thing I was speaking of!

ASL. Yes, that is the Doctor's article, Mr. Mayor.

HOV. Oh, is *that* what you were speaking about?

PETER. Yes, that is it. What do you think of it?

HOV. Oh, I am only a layman—and I have only taken a very cursory glance at it.

PETER. But you are going to print it?

HOV. I cannot very well refuse a distinguished man—

ASL. I have nothing to do with editing the paper, Mr. Mayor—

PETER. I understand.

ASL. I merely print what is put into my hands.

PETER. Quite so.

ASL. And so I must— [*moves off towards the printing-room*].

PETER. No, but wait a moment, Mr. Aslaksen. You will allow me, Mr. Ha stad?

HOV. If you please, Mr. Mayor.

PETER. You are a discreet a thoughtful man, Mr. Aslaksen.

ASL. I am delighted to hear y think so, sir.

PETER. And a man of very cons erable influence.

ASL. Chiefly among the small trad men, sir.

PETER. The small tax-payers a the majority—here as everywhere el

ASL. That is true.

PETER. And I have no doubt y know the general trend of opini among them, don't you?

ASL. Yes, I think I may say I Mr. Mayor.

PETER. Yes. Well, since there such a praiseworthy spirit of self-sa rifice among the less wealthy citizens our town—

ASL. What?

HOV. Self-sacrifice?

PETER. It is pleasing evidence of public-spirited feeling, extremely plea ing evidence. I might almost say hardly expected it. But you have closer knowledge of public opini than I.

ASL. But, Mr. Mayor—

PETER. And indeed it is no sm sacrifice that the town is going to mak

HOV. The town?

ASL. But I don't understand. Is the Baths—?

PETER. At a provisional estima the alterations that the Medical Offic asserts to be desirable will cost som where about twenty thousand poun

ASL. That is a lot of money, but

PETER. Of course it will be nece sary to raise a municipal loan.

Hov. [*getting up*]. Surely you never ean that the town must pay—?

Asl. Do you mean that it must come t of the municipal funds?—out of e ill-filled pockets of the small trades-en?

Peter. Well, my dear Mr. Aslaksen, here else is the money to come from?

Asl. The gentlemen who own the aths ought to provide that.

Peter. The proprietors of the Baths e not in a position to incur any fur-er expense.

Asl. Is that absolutely certain, Mr. ayor.

Peter. I have satisfied myself that is so. If the town wants these very tensive alterations, it will have to ay for them.

Asl. But, damn it all—I beg your ardon—this is quite another matter, r. Hovstad!

Hov. It is, indeed.

Peter. The most fatal part of it is at we shall be obliged to shut the aths for a couple of years.

Hov. Shut them? Shut them alto-ther?

Asl. For two years?

Peter. Yes, the work will take as ng as that—at least.

Asl. I'm damned if we will stand at, Mr. Mayor! What are we house-olders to live upon in the meantime?

Peter. Unfortunately that is an ex-emely difficult question to answer, Mr. slaksen. But what would you have do? Do you suppose we shall have single visitor in the town, if we go out proclaiming that our water is olluted, that we are living over a ague spot, that the entire town—

Asl. And the whole thing is merely nagination?

Peter. With the best will in the world, I have not been able to come to any other conclusion.

Asl. Well then I must say it is absolutely unjustifiable of Dr. Stockmann—I beg your pardon, Mr. Mayor —

Peter. What you say is lamentably true, Mr. Aslaksen. My brother has unfortunately always been a headstrong man.

Asl. After this, do you mean to give him your support, Mr. Hovstad?

Hov. Can you suppose for a moment that I—?

Peter. I have drawn up a short *résumé* of the situation as it appears from a reasonable man's point of view. In it I have indicated how certain possible defects might suitably be remedied without outrunning the resources of the Baths Committee.

Hov. Have you got it with you, Mr. Mayor.

Peter. [*fumbling in his pocket*]. Yes, I brought it with me in case you should—

Asl. Good Lord, there he is!

Peter. Who? My brother?

Hov. Where? Where?

Asl. He has just gone through the printing-room.

Peter. How unlucky! I don't want to meet him here, and I had still several things to speak to you about.

Hov. [*pointing to the door on the right*]. Go in there for the present.

Peter. But—?

Hov. You will find only Billing in there.

Asl. Quick, quick, Mr. Mayor—he is just coming.

Peter. Yes, very well; but see that you get rid of him quickly. [*Goes out*

through the door on the right, which ASLAKSEN *opens for him and shuts after him*].

HOV. Pretend to be doing something, Aslaksen. [*Sits down and writes.* ASLAKSEN *begins foraging among a heap of newspapers that are lying on a chair.*]

DR. STO. [*coming in from the printing-room*]. Here I am again. [*Puts down his hat and stick.*]

HOV. [*writing*]. Already, Doctor? Hurry up with what we were speaking about, Aslaksen. We are very pressed for time to-day.

DR. STO. [*to* ASLAKSEN]. No proof for me to see yet, I hear.

ASL. [*without turning round*]. You couldn't expect it yet, Doctor.

DR. STO. No, no; but I am impatient, as you can understand. I shall not know a moment's peace of mind till I see it in print.

HOV. Hm!—It will take a good while yet, won't it, Aslaksen?

ASL. Yes, I am almost afraid it will.

DR. STO. All right, my dear friends; I will come back. I do not mind coming back twice if necessary. A matter of such great importance—the welfare of the town at stake—it is no time to shirk trouble. [*Is just going, but stops and comes back.*] Look here—there is one thing more I want to speak to you about.

HOV. Excuse me, but could it not wait till some other time?

DR. STO. I can tell you in half a dozen words. It is only this. When my article is read to-morrow and it is realised that I have been quietly working the whole winter for the welfare of the town—

HOV. Yes, but, Doctor—

DR. STO. I know what you are goin to say. You don't see how on eart it was any more than my duty—m obvious duty as a citizen. Of cours it wasn't; I know that as well as yo But my fellow citizens, you know— Good Lord, think of all the good sou who think so highly of me— !

ASL. Yes, our townsfolk have had very high opinion of you so far, Do tor.

DR. STO. Yes, and that is just wh I am afraid they—. Well, this is t point; when this reaches them, esp cially the poorer classes, and soun in their ears like a summons to tak the town's affairs into their own han for the future—

HOV. [*getting up*]. Ahem! Docto I won't conceal from you the fact-

DR. STO. Ah!—I knew there w something in the wind! But I wor hear a word of it. If anything of th sort is being set on foot—

HOV. Of what sort?

DR. STO. Well, whatever it is whether it is a demonstration in n honour, or a banquet, or a subscri tion list for some presentation to n —whatever it is, you must promise n solemnly and faithfully to put a sto to it. You too, Mr. Aslaksen; do y understand?

HOV. You must forgive me, Docto but sooner or later we must tell you t plain truth—

[*He is interrupted by the entran of* MRS. STOCKMANN, *who comes from the street door.*]

MRS. STO. [*seeing her husband*]. Ju as I thought!

HOV. [*going towards her*]. You to Mrs. Stockmann?

Dr. Sto. What on earth do *you* ant here, Katherine?

Mrs. Sto. I should think you know ery well what I want.

Hov. Won't you sit down? Or per- aps—

Mrs. Sto. No, thank you; don't ouble. And you must not be offended my coming to fetch my husband; I n the mother of three children, you now.

Dr. Sto. Nonsense!—we know all out that.

Mrs. Sto. Well, one would not give u credit for much thought for your ife and children to-day; if you had d that, you would not have gone d dragged us all into misfortune.

Dr. Sto. Are you out of your senses, atherine! Because a man has a wife d children, is he not to be allowed proclaim the truth—is he not to be lowed to be an actively useful citizen is he not to be allowed to do a service his native town!

Mrs. Sto. Yes, Thomas—in reason.

Asl. Just what I say. Moderation everything.

Mrs. Sto. And that is why you rong us, Mr. Hovstad, in enticing y husband away from his home and aking a dupe of him in all this.

Hov. I certainly am making a dupe no one—

Dr. Sto. Making a dupe of me! Do u suppose *I* should allow myself to duped!

Mrs. Sto. It is just what you do. now quite well you have more brains an anyone in the town, but you are remely easily duped, Thomas. [*To ovstad.*] Please to realise that he es his post at the Baths if you int what he has written—

Asl. What!

Hov. Look here, Doctor—

Dr. Sto. [*laughing*]. Ha—ha!—just let them try! No, no—they will take good care not to. I have got the compact majority behind me, let me tell you!

Mrs. Sto. Yes, that is just the worst of it—your having any such horrid thing behind you.

Dr. Sto. Rubbish, Katherine!—Go home and look after your house and leave me to look after the community. How can you be so afraid, when I am so confident and happy? [*Walks up and down, rubbing his hands.*] Truth and the People will win the fight, you may be certain! I see the whole of the broad-minded middle class marching like a victorious army—! [*Stops beside a chair.*] What the deuce is that lying there?

Asl. Good Lord!

Hov. Ahem!

Dr. Sto. Here we have the topmost pinacle of authority! [*Takes the Mayor's official hat carefully between his finger-tips and holds it up in the air.*]

Mrs. Sto. The Mayor's hat!

Dr. Sto. And here is the staff of office too. How in the name of all that's wonderful—?

Hov. Well, you see—

Dr. Sto. Oh, I understand. He has been here trying to talk it over. Ha—ha!—he made rather a mistake there! And as soon as he caught sight of me in the printing-room—. [*Bursts out laughing.*] Did he run away, Mr. Aslaksen?

Asl. [*hurriedly*]. Yes, he ran away, Doctor.

Dr. Sto. Ran away without his stick or his—. Fiddlesticks! Peter doesn't run away and leave his belongings behind him. But what the deuce have you done with him? Ah!—in there, of course. Now you shall see, Katherine!

Mrs. Sto. Thomas—please don't—!

Asl. Don't be rash, Doctor.

[Dr. Stockmann *has put on the Mayor's hat and taken his stick in his hand. He goes up to the door, opens it, and stands with his hand to his hat at the salute.* Peter Stockmann *comes in, red with anger.* Billing *follows him.*]

Peter. What does this tomfoolery mean?

Dr. Sto. Be respectful, my good Peter. I am the chief authority in the town now. [*Walks up and down.*]

Mrs. Sto. [*almost in tears*]. Really, Thomas!

Peter [*following him about*]. Give me my hat and stick.

Dr. Sto. [*in the same tone as before*]. If you are chief constable, let me tell you that I am the Mayor—I am the master of the whole town, please understand!

Peter. Take off my hat, I tell you. Remember it is part of an official uniform.

Dr. Sto. Pooh! Do you think the newly awakened lion-hearted people are going to be frightened by an official hat? There is going to be a revolution in the town to-morrow, let me tell you. You thought you could turn me out; but now I shall turn you out—turn you out of all your various offices. Do you think I cannot? Listen to me. I have triumphant social forces behind me. Hovstad and Billing will thunder in the "People's Messenger and Aslaksen will take the field the head of the whole Householder Association—

Asl. That I won't, Doctor.

Dr. Sto. Of course you will—

Peter. Ah!—may I ask then if M Hovstad intends to join this agitatio

Hov. No, Mr. Mayor.

Asl. No, Mr. Hovstad is not su a fool as to go and ruin his pap and himself for the sake of an im ginary grievance.

Dr. Sto. [*looking round him*]. Wh does this mean?

Hov. You have represented yo case in a false light, Doctor, a therefore I am unable to give you r support.

Bill. And after what the May was so kind as to tell me just no I—

Dr. Sto. A false light! Leave th part of it to me. Only print r article; I am quite capable of defen ing it.

Hov. I am not going to print I cannot and will not and dare r print it.

Dr. Sto. You dare not? What nc sense!—you are the editor; and editor controls his paper, I suppos

Asl. No, it is the subscribers, Dc tor.

Peter. Fortunately, yes.

Asl. It is public opinion—the e lightened public—householders a people of that kind; they control t newspapers.

Dr. Sto. [*composedly*]. And I ha all these influences against me?

Asl. Yes, you have. It would me the absolute ruin of the communi if your article were to appear.

Dr. Sto. Indeed.

Peter. My hat and stick, if you lease. [Dr. Stockmann *takes off the at and lays it on the table with the ick.* Peter Stockmann *takes them p.*] Your authority as Mayor has me to an untimely end.

Dr. Sto. We have not got to the nd yet. [*To* Hovstad.] Then it is uite impossible for you to print my rticle in the "People's Messenger"?

Hov. Quite impossible—out of re-ard for your family as well.

Mrs. Sto. You need not concern ourself about his family, thank you, r. Hovstad.

Peter [*taking a paper from his ocket*]. It will be sufficient, for the uidance of the public, if this appears. is an official statement. May I ouble you?

Hov. [*taking the paper*]. Certainly; will see that it is printed.

Dr. Sto. But not mine. Do you nagine that you can silence me and ifle the truth! You will not find it easy as you suppose. Mr. Aslaksen, ndly take my manuscript at once nd print it as a pamphlet—at my xpense. I will have four hundred pies—no, five—six hundred.

Asl. If you offered me its weight in old, I could not lend my press for ny such purpose, Doctor. It would e flying in the face of public opinion. ou will not get it printed anywhere the town.

Dr. Sto. Then give it me back.

Hov. [*giving him the MS*]. Here is.

Dr. Sto. [*taking his hat and stick*]. shall be made public all the same. I ll read it out at a mass meeting of e townspeople. All my fellow-citizens shall hear the voice of truth!

Peter. You will not find any public body in the town that will give you the use of their hall for such a purpose.

Asl. Not a single one, I am certain.

Bill. No, I'm damned if you will find one.

Mrs. Sto. But this is too shameful! Why should every one turn against you like that?

Dr. Sto. [*angrily*]. I will tell you why. It is because all the men in this town are old women—like you; they all think of nothing but their families, and never of the community itself.

Mrs. Sto. [*putting her arm into his*]. Then I will show them that an —an old woman can be a man for once. I am going to stand by you, Thomas!

Dr. Sto. Bravely said, Katherine! It shall be made public—as I am a living soul! If I can't hire a hall, I shall hire a drum, and parade the town with it and read it at every street corner.

Peter. You are surely not such an arrant fool as that!

Dr. Sto. Yes, I am.

Asl. You won't find a single man in the whole town to go with you, Dr. Stockmann.

Bill. No, I'm damned if you will.

Mrs. Sto. Don't give in, Thomas. I will tell the boys to go with you.

Dr. Sto. That is a splendid idea!

Mrs. Sto. Morten will be delighted; and Ejlif will do whatever he does.

Dr. Sto. Yes, and Petra!—and you too, Katherine!

Mrs. Sto. No, I won't do that; but I will stand at the window and watch

you, that's what I will do.

DR. STO. [*puts his arms around her and kisses her*]. Thank you, my dear! Now, you and I are going to try a fall, my fine gentlemen! I am going to see whether a pack of cowards can succeed in gagging a patriot who wants to purify society! [*He and his wife go out by the street door.*]

PETER [*shaking his head seriously*]. Now he has sent *her* out of her senses, too.

ACT IV

SCENE—*A big, old-fashioned room in* CAPTAIN HORSTER'S *house. At the back folding-doors, which are standing open, lead to an ante-room. Three windows in the left-hand wall. In the middle of the opposite wall a platform has been erected. On this is a small table with two candles, a water-bottle and glass, and a bell. The room is lit by lamps placed between the windows. In the foreground on the left there is a table with candles and a chair. To the right is a door and some chairs standing near it. The room is nearly filled with a crowd of townspeople of all sorts, a few women and schoolboys being amongst them. People are still streaming in from the back, and the room is soon filled.*

1ST CITIZEN [*meeting another*]. Hullo, Lamstad! You here too?

2ND CITIZEN. I go to every public meeting, I do.

3RD CITIZEN. Brought your whistle too, I expect!

2ND CITIZEN. I should think so. Haven't you?

3RD CITIZEN. Rather! And old Evansen said he was going to bring a cowhorn, he did.

2ND CITIZEN. Good old Evansen! [*Laughter among the crowd.*]

5TH CITIZEN [*coming up to them*] I say, tell me what is going on he to-night.

2ND CITIZEN. Dr. Stockmann is g ing to deliver an address attacking t Mayor.

4TH CITIZEN. But the Mayor is h brother.

1ST CITIZEN. That doesn't matte Dr. Stockmann's not the chap to afraid.

3RD CITIZEN. But he is in the wron it said so in the "People's Messenge

2ND CITIZEN. Yes, I expect he mu be in the wrong this time, becau neither the Householders' Associati nor the Citizens' Club would lend hi their hall for his meeting.

1ST CITIZEN. He couldn't even g the loan of the hall at the Baths.

2ND CITIZEN. No, I should think n

A MAN IN ANOTHER PART OF T CROWD. I say—who are we to back in this?

ANOTHER MAN, BESIDE HIM. Wat Aslaksen, and do as he does.

BILL. [*pushing his way through t crowd, with a writing-case under arm*]. Excuse me, gentlemen—do y mind letting me through? I am porting for the "People's Messenge Thank you very much! [*He sits do at the table on the left.*]

A WORKMAN. Who was that?

SECOND WORKMAN. Don't you kn him? It's Billing, who writes for A laksen's paper.

[CAPTAIN HORSTER *brings in* M STOCKMANN *and* PETRA *through door on the right.* EJLIF *and* MORT *follow them in.*]

HORS. I thought you might all here; you can slip out easily fr

here, if things get too lively.

MRS. STO. Do you think there will be a disturbance?

HORS. One can never tell—with such a crowd. But sit down, and don't be uneasy.

MRS. STO. [*sitting down*]. It was extremely kind of you to offer my husband the room.

HORS. Well, if nobody else would—

PETRA [*who has sat down beside her mother*]. And it was a plucky thing to do, Captain Horster.

HORS. Oh, it is not such a great matter as all that.

[HOVSTAD *and* ASLAKSEN *make their way through the crowd.*]

ASL. [*going up to* HORSTER]. Has the Doctor not come yet?

HORS. He is waiting in the next room. [*Movement in the crowd by the door at the back.*]

HOV. Look—here comes the Mayor!

BILL. Yes, I'm damned if he hasn't come after all!

[PETER STOCKMANN *makes his way gradually through the crowd, bows courteously, and takes up a position by the wall on the left. Shortly afterwards* DR. STOCKMANN *comes in by the right-hand door. He is dressed in a black frock-coat, with a white tie. There is a little feeble applause, which is hushed down. Silence is obtained.*]

DR. STO. [*in an undertone*]. How do you feel, Katherine?

MRS. STO. All right, thank you. [*Lowering her voice.*] Be sure not to lose your temper, Thomas.

DR. STO. Oh, I know how to control myself. [*Looks at his watch, steps on to the platform, and bows.*] It is a quarter past—so I will begin. [*Takes his MS out of his pocket.*]

ASL. I think we ought to elect a chairman first.

DR. STO. No, it is quite unnecessary.

SOME OF THE CROWD. Yes—yes!

PETER. I certainly think too that we ought to have a chairman.

DR. STO. But I have called this meeting to deliver a lecture, Peter.

PETER. Dr. Stockmann's lecture may possibly lead to a considerable conflict of opinion.

VOICES IN THE CROWD. A chairman! A chairman!

HOV. The general wish of the meeting seems to be that a chairman should be elected.

DR. STO. [*restraining himself.*] Very well—let the meeting have its way.

ASL. Will the Mayor be good enough to undertake the task?

THREE MEN [*clapping their hands*]. Bravo! Bravo!

PETER. For various reasons, which you will easily understand, I must beg to be excused. But fortunately we have amongst us a man who I think will be acceptable to you all. I refer to the President of the Householders' Association, Mr. Aslaksen.

SEVERAL VOICES. Yes—Aslaksen! Bravo Aslaksen!

[DR. STOCKMANN *takes up his MS and walks up and down the platform.*]

ASL. Since my fellow-citizens choose to entrust me with this duty, I cannot refuse.

[*Loud applause.* ASLAKSEN *mounts the platform.*]

BILL. [*writing*]. "Mr. Aslaksen was elected with enthusiasm."

ASL. And now, as I am in this position, I should like to say a few brief

words. I am a quiet and peaceable man, who believes in discreet moderation, and—and—in moderate discretion. All my friends can bear witness to that.

SEVERAL VOICES. That's right! That's right, Aslaksen!

ASL. I have learnt in the school of life and experience that moderation is the most valuable virtue a citizen can possess—

PETER. Hear, hear!

ASL. And moreover that discretion and moderation are what enable a man to be of most service to the community. I would therefore suggest to our esteemed fellow-citizen, who has called this meeting, that he should strive to keep strictly within the bounds of moderation.

A MAN BY THE DOOR. Three cheers for the Moderation Society!

A VOICE. Shame!

SEVERAL VOICES. Sh!—Sh!

ASL. No interruptions, gentlemen, please! Does anyone wish to make any remarks?

PETER. Mr. Chairman.

ASL. The Mayor will address the meeting.

PETER. In consideration of the close relationship in which, as you all know, I stand to the present Medical Officer of the Baths, I should have preferred not to speak this evening. But my official position with regard to the Baths and my solicitude for the vital interests of the town compel me to bring forward a motion. I venture to presume that there is not a single one of our citizens present who considers it desirable that unreliable and exaggerated accounts of the sanitary condition of the Baths and the town should be spread abroad.

SEVERAL VOICES. No, no! Certainly not! We protest against it!

PETER. Therefore I should like to propose that the meeting should not permit the Medical Officer either to read or comment on his proposed lecture.

DR. STO. [*impatiently*]. Not permit —! What the devil—!

MRS. STO. [*coughing*]. Ahem!—ahem!

DR. STO. [*collecting himself*]. Very well. Go ahead!

PETER. In my communication to the "People's Messenger," I have put the essential facts before the public in such a way that every fair-minded citizen can easily form his own opinion. From it you will see that the main result of the Medical Officer's proposals—apart from their constituting a vote of censure on the leading men of the town—would be to saddle the ratepayers with an unnecessary expenditure of at least some thousands of pounds.

[*Sounds of disapproval among the audience, and some cat-calls.*]

ASL. [*ringing his bell*]. Silence please, gentlemen! I beg to support the Mayor's motion. I quite agree with him that there is something behind this agitation started by the Doctor. He talks about the Baths; but it is a revolution he is aiming at—he wants to get the administration of the town put into new hands. No one doubts the honesty of the Doctor's intentions—no one will suggest that there can be any two opinions as to that. I myself am a believer in self-government for the people, provided it does not fall too heavily on the rate

ayers. But that would be the case ere; and that is why I will see Dr. tockmann damned—I beg your par- on—before I go with him in the natter. You can pay too dearly for thing sometimes; that is my opinion.

[*Loud applause on all sides.*]

Hov. I, too, feel called upon to ex- lain my position. Dr. Stockmann's gitation appeared to be gaining a ertain amount of sympathy at first, o I supported it as impartially as I ould. But presently we had reason o suspect that we had allowed our- elves to be misled by misrepresenta- on of the state of affairs—

Dr. Sto. Misrepresentation—!

Hov. Well, let us say a not en- rely trustworthy representation. The Iayor's statement has proved that. I ope no one here has any doubts as o my liberal principles; the attitude f the "People's Messenger" towards nportant political questions is well nown to every one. But the advice f experienced and thoughtful men has nvinced me that in purely local mat- rs a newspaper ought to proceed ith a certain caution.

Asl. I entirely agree with the peaker.

Hov. And, in the matter before us, is now an undoubted fact that Dr. tockmann has public opinion against m. Now, what is an editor's first nd most obvious duty, gentlemen? Is not to work in harmony with his eaders? Has he not received a sort f tacit mandate to work persistently nd assiduously for the welfare of ose whose opinions he represents? Or it possible I am mistaken in that?

Voices from the crowd. No, no! You are quite right!

Hov. It has cost me a severe struggle to break with a man in whose house I have been lately a frequent guest—a man who till to-day has been able to pride himself on the undivided good-will of his fellow-citizens—a man whose only, or at all events whose essential, failing is that he is swayed by his heart rather than his head.

A few scattered voices. That is true! Bravo, Stockmann!

Hov. But my duty to the community obliged me to break with him. And there is another consideration that impels me to oppose him, and, as far as possible, to arrest him on the perilous course he has adopted; that is, consideration for his family—

Dr. Sto. Please stick to the water-supply and drainage!

Hov. —consideration, I repeat, for his wife and his children for whom he has made no provision.

Mor. Is that us, mother?

Mrs. Sto. Hush!

Asl. I will now put the Mayor's proposition to the vote.

Dr. Sto. There is no necessity! To-night I have no intention of dealing with all that filth down at the Baths. No; I have something quite different to say to you.

Peter [*aside*]. What is coming now?

A Drunken Man [*by the entrance door*]. I am a ratepayer! And therefore I have a right to speak too! And my entire—firm—inconceivable opinion is—

A number of voices. Be quiet, at the back there!

Others. He is drunk! Turn him out! [*They turn him out.*]

Dr. Sto. Am I allowed to speak?

ASL. [*ringing his bell*]. Dr. Stockmann will address the meeting.

DR. STO. I should like to have seen anyone, a few days ago, dare to attempt to silence me as has been done to-night! I would have defended my sacred rights as a man, like a lion! But now it is all one to me; I have something of even weightier importance to say to you.

[*The crowd presses nearer to him,* MORTEN KIIL *conspicuous among them.*]

DR. STO. [*continuing*]. I have thought and pondered a great deal, these last few days—pondered over such a variety of things that in the end my head seemed too full to hold them—

PETER [*with a cough*]. Ahem!

DR. STO. —but I got them clear in my mind at last, and then I saw the whole situation lucidly. And that is why I am standing here to-night. I have a great revelation to make to you, my fellow-citizens! I will impart to you a discovery of a far wider scope than the trifling matter that our water-supply is poisoned and our medicinal Baths are standing on pestiferous soil.

A NUMBER OF VOICES [*shouting*]. Don't talk about the Baths! We won't hear you! None of that!

DR. STO. I have already told you that what I want to speak about is the great discovery I have made lately—the discovery that all the sources of our *moral* life are poisoned and that the whole fabric of our civic community is founded on the pestiferous soil of falsehood.

VOICES OF DISCONCERTED CITIZENS. What is that he says?

PETER. Such an insinuation—!

ASL. [*with his hand on his bell*] I call upon the speaker to moderat his language.

DR. STO. I have always loved m native town as a man only can lov the home of his youthful days. was not old when I went away fro here; and exile, longing and memorie cast as it were an additional hal over both the town and its inhabitant [*Some clapping and applause.*] An there I stayed, for many years, in horrible hole far away up north. Whe I came into contact with some of th people that lived scattered abou among the rocks, I often thought would of been more service to the poo half-starved creatures if a veterinar doctor had been sent up there, instea of a man like me. [*Murmurs amon* the *crowd.*]

BILL. [*laying down his pen*]. I' damned if I have ever heard—!

HOV. It is an insult to a respectab population!

DR. STO. Wait a bit! I do not thin anyone will charge me with havin forgotten my native town up ther I was like one of the eider-duc brooding on its nest, and what hatched was—the plans for these Bath [*Applause and protests.*] And the when fate at last decreed for me t great happiness of coming home aga —I assure you, gentlemen, I thoug I had nothing more in the world wish for. Or rather, there was o thing I wished for—eagerly, unti ingly, ardently—and that was to able to be of service to my nati town and the good of the communit

PETER [*looking at the ceiling*]. You hose a strange way of doing it—hem!

DR. STO. And so, with my eyes linded to the real facts, I revelled n happiness. But yesterday morning —no, to be precise, it was yesterday fternoon—the eyes of my mind were pened wide, and the first thing I ealised was the colossal stupidity of ne authorities—. [*Uproar, shouts and ughter.* MRS. STOCKMANN *coughs ersistently.*]

PETER. Mr. Chairman!

ASL. [*ringing his bell*]. By virtue f my authority—!

DR. STO. It is a petty thing to atch me up on a word, Mr. Aslasken. What I mean is only that I got scent f the unbelievable piggishness our eading men had been responsible for own at the Baths. I can't stand lead- ng men at any price!—I have had nough of such people in my time. hey are like billy-goats in a young lantation; they do mischief every- here. They stand in a free man's ay, whichever way he turns, and what should like best would be to see them xterminated like any other vermin—. *Uproar.*]

PETER. Mr. Chairman, can we allow ich expressions to pass?

ASL. [*with his hand on his bell*]. octor—!

DR. STO. I cannot understand how is that I have only now acquired clear conception of what these gen- y are, when I had almost daily be- re my eyes in this town such an ex- llent specimen of them—my brother eter—slow-witted and hide-bound in rejudice—. [*Laughter, uproar and sses.* MRS. STOCKMANN *sits coughing assiduously.* ASLAKSEN *rings his bell violently.*]

THE DRUNKEN MAN [*who has got in again*]. Is it me he is talking about? My name's Petersen, all right— but devil take me if I—

ANGRY VOICES. Turn out that drunken man! Turn him out. [*He is turned out again.*]

PETER. Who was that person?

1ST CITIZEN. I don't know who he is, Mr. Mayor.

2ND CITIZEN. He doesn't belong here.

3RD CITIZEN. I expect he is a navvy from over at [*the rest is inaudible*].

ASL. He had obviously had too much beer.—Proceed, Doctor, but please strive to be moderate in your language.

DR. STO. Very well, gentlemen, I will say no more about our leading men. And if anyone imagines, from what I have just said, that my object is to attack these people this evening, he is wrong—absolutely wide of the mark. For I cherish the comforting conviction that these parasites—all these venerable relics of a dying school of thought—are most admirably paving the way for their own extinction; they need no doctor's help to hasten their end. Nor is it folk of that kind who constitute the most pressing danger to the community. It is not they who are most instrumental in poisoning the sources of our moral life and directing the ground on which we stand. It is not they who are the most dangerous enemies of truth and freedom amongst us.

SHOUTS FROM ALL SIDES. Who then? Who is it? Name! Name!

DR. STO. You may depend upon it I

shall name them! That is precisely the great discovery I made yesterday. [*Raises his voice.*] The most dangerous enemy to truth and freedom amongst us is the compact majority—yes, the damned compact Liberal majority—that is it! Now you know; [*Tremendous uproar. Most of the crowd are shouting, stamping and hissing. Some of the older men among them exchange stolen glances and seem to be enjoying themselves.* MRS. STOCKMANN *gets up, looking anxious.* EJLIF *and* MORTEN *advance threateningly upon some schoolboys who are playing pranks.* ASLAKSEN *rings his bell and begs for silence.* HOVSTAD *and* BILLING *both talk at once, but are inaudible. At last quiet is restored.*]

ASL. As chairman, I call upon the speaker to withdraw the ill-considered expressions he has just used.

DR. STO. Never, Mr. Aslaksen! It is the majority in our community that denies me my freedom and seeks to prevent my speaking the truth.

HOV. The majority always has right on its side.

BILL. And truth too, by God!

DR. STO. The majority *never* has right on its side. Never, I say! That is one of these social lies against which an independent, intelligent man must wage war. Who is it that constitute the majority of the population in a country? Is it the clever folk or the stupid? I don't imagine you will dispute the fact that at present the stupid people are in an absolutely overwhelming majority all the world over. But, good Lord!—you can never pretend that it is right that the stupid folk should govern the clever ones! [*Uproar and cries.*] Oh, yes—you can shout me down, I know! but you can not answer me. The majority has *might* on its side—unfortunately; but *right* it has *not.* I am in the right—I and a few other scattered individuals. The minority is always in the right. [*Renewed uproar.*]

HOV. Aha!—so Dr. Stockmann has become an aristocrat since the day before yesterday!

DR. STO. I have already said that I don't intend to waste a word on the puny, narrow-chested, short-winded crew whom we are leaving astern. Pulsating life no longer concerns itself with them. I am thinking of the few, the scattered few amongst us who have absorbed new and vigorous truths. Such men stand, as it were, at the outposts, so far ahead that the compact majority has not yet been able to come up with them; and there they are fighting for truths that are too newly-born into the world of consciousness to have any considerable number of people on their side as yet.

HOV. So the Doctor is a revolutionary now!

DR. STO. Good heavens—of course I am, Mr. Hovstad! I propose to raise a revolution against the lie that the majority has the monopoly of the truth. What sort of truths are they that the majority usually supports? They are truths that are of such an advanced age that they are beginning to break up. And if a truth is as old as that, it is also in a fair way to become a lie, gentlemen. [*Laughter and mocking cries.*] Yes, believe me or not as you like; but truths are by no means as long-lived as Methuselah—as some folk imagine. A normally constituted truth lives, let us say, as a rule seven

een or eighteen, or at most twenty ears; seldom longer. But truths as ged as that are always worn fright- ully thin, and nevertheless it is only nen that the majority recognises them nd recommends them to the commu- ity as wholesome moral nourishment. here is no great nutritive value in nat sort of fare, I can assure you; nd, as a doctor, I ought to know. hese "majority truths" are like last ear's cured meat—like rancid, tainted am; and they are the origin of the noral scurvy that is rampant in our ommunities.

ASL. It appears to me that the peaker is wandering a long way from is subject.

PETER. I quite agree with the Chair- an.

DR. STO. Have you gone clean out f your senses, Peter? I am sticking s closely to my subject as I can; for y subject is precisely this, that it is ie masses, the majority—this infernal ompact majority—that poisons the ources of our moral life and infects ie ground we stand on.

HOV. And all this because the great, road-minded majority of the people is rudent enough to show deference only well-ascertained and well-approved uths?

DR. STO. Ah, my good Mr. Hovstad, on't talk nonsense about well-ascer- ined truths! The truths of which the asses now approve are the very uths that the fighters at the outposts eld to in the days of our grand- thers. We fighters at the outposts owadays no longer approve of them; nd I do not believe there is any other ell-ascertained truth except this, that o community can live a healthy life if it is nourished only on such old mar- rowless truths.

HOV. But instead of standing there using vague generalities, it would be interesting if you would tell us what these old marrowless truths are, that we are nourished on.

[*Applause from many quarters.*]

DR. STO. Oh, I could give you a whole string of such abominations; but to begin with I will confine myself to one well-approved truth, which at bot- tom is a foul lie, but upon which nevertheless Mr. Hovstad and the "People's Messenger" and all the "Mes- senger's" supporters are nourished.

HOV. And that is—?

DR. STO. That is, the doctrine you have inherited from your forefathers and proclaim thoughtlessly far and wide—the doctrine that the public, the crowd, the masses, are the essential part of the population—that they con- stitute the People—that the common folk, the ignorant and incomplete ele- ment in the community, have the same right to pronounce judgment and to approve, to direct and to govern, as the isolated, intellectually superior per- sonalities in it.

BILL. Well, damn me if ever I—

HOV. [*at the same time, shouting out.*] Fellow-citizens, take good note of that!

A NUMBER OF VOICES [*angrily*]. Oho! —we are not the People! Only the su- perior folk are to govern, are they!

A WORKMAN. Turn the fellow out, for talking such rubbish!

ANOTHER. Out with him!

ANOTHER [*calling out*]. Blow your horn, Evensen!

[*A horn is blown loudly, amidst hisses and an angry uproar.*]

DR. STO. [*when the noise has somewhat abated*]. Be reasonable! Can't you stand hearing the voice of truth for once? I don't in the least expect you to agree with me all at once; but I must say I did expect Mr. Hovstad to admit I was right, when he had recovered his composure a little. He claims to be a freethinker—

VOICES [*in murmurs of astonishment*]. Freethinker, did he say? Is Hovstad a freethinker?

HOV. [*shouting*]. Prove it, Dr. Stockmann! When have I said so in print?

DR. STO. [*reflecting*]. No, confound it, you are right!—you have never had the courage to. Well, I won't put you in a hole, Mr. Hovstad. Let us say it is I that am the freethinker, then. I am going to prove to you, scientifically, that the "People's Messenger" leads you by the nose in a shameful manner when it tells you that you—that the common people, the crowd, the masses, are the real essence of the People. That is only a newspaper lie, I tell you! The common people are nothing more than the raw material of which a People is made. [*Groans, laughter and uproar.*] Well, isn't that the case? Isn't there an enormous difference between a well-bred and an ill-bred strain of animals? Take, for instance, a common barn-door hen. What sort of eating do you get from a shrivelled up old scrag of a fowl like that? Not much, do you! And what sort of eggs does it lay? A fairly good crow or a raven can lay pretty nearly as good an egg. But take a well-bred Spanish or Japanese hen, or a good pheasant or a turkey —then you will see the difference. Or take the case of dogs, with whom we humans are on such intimate terms Think first of an ordinary common cu —I mean one of the horrbile, coarse haired, low-bred curs that do nothin but run about the streets and befou the walls of the houses. Compare on of these curs with a poodle whose sire for many generations have been bre in a gentleman's house, where the have had the best of food and had th opportunity of hearing soft voices an music. Do you not think that th poodle's brain is developed to quite different degree from that of the cur Of course it is. It is puppies of well bred poodles like that, that showme train to do incredibly clever tricks— things that a common cur could neve learn to do even if it stood on its head [*Uproar and mocking cries.*]

A CITIZEN [*calls out*]. Are you go ing to make out we are dogs, now?

ANOTHER CITIZEN. We are not ani mals, Doctor!

DR. STO. Yes, but, bless my soul, w *are,* my friend! It is true we are th finest animals anyone could wish for but, even amongst us, exceptionall fine animals are rare. There is a tre mendous difference between poodle-me and cur-men. And the amusing par of it is, that Mr. Hovstad quite agree with me as long as it is a question o four-footed animals—

HOV. Yes, it is true enough as fa as they are concerned.

DR. STO. Very well. But as soo as I extend the principle and apply i to two-legged animals, Mr. Hovsta stops short. He no longer dares t think independently, or to pursue hi ideas to their logical conclusion; so h turns the whole theory upside dow and proclaims in the "People's Mes

nger" that it is the barn-door hens
nd street curs that are the finest speci-
ens in the menagerie. But that is
ways the way, as long as a man re-
ins the traces of common origin and
as not worked his way up to intel-
ctual distinction.

Hov. I lay no claim to any sort of
istinction. I am the son of humble
ountryfolk, and I am proud that the
ock I come from is rooted deep
mong the common people he insults.

Voices. Bravo, Hovstad! Bravo!
ravo!

Dr. Sto. The kind of common people
mean are not only to be found low
own in the social scale; they crawl
nd swarm all around us—even in the
ghest social positions. You have only
look at your own fine, distinguished
layor! My brother Peter is every bit
s plebeian as anyone that walks in
vo shoes—[*laughter and hisses*].

Peter. I protest against personal
lusions of this kind.

Dr. Sto. [*imperturbably*]. —and
at, not because he is, like myself,
escended from some old rascal of a
rate from Pomerania or thereabouts
-because that is who we are descended
om—

Peter. An absurd legend. I deny
!

Dr. Sto. —but because he thinks
hat his superiors think and holds the
me opinions as they. People who
that are, intellectually speaking,
mmon people; and that is why my
agnificent brother Peter is in reality
very far from any distinction—and
nsequently also so far from being
eral-minded.

Peter. Mr. Chairman—!

Hov. So it is only the distinguished men that are liberal-minded in this country? We are learning something quite new! [*Laughter.*]

Dr. Sto. Yes, that is part of my new discovery too. And another part of it is that broad-mindedness is almost precisely the same thing as morality. That is why I maintain that it is absolutely inexcusable in the "People's Messenger" to proclaim, day in and day out, the false doctrine that it is the masses, the crowd, the compact majority, that have the monopoly of broad-mindedness and morality—and that vice and corruption and every kind of intellectual depravity are the result of culture, just as the filth that is draining into our Baths is the result of the tanneries up at Mölledal! [*Uproar and interruptions.* Dr. Stockmann *is undisturbed, and goes on, carried away by his ardour, with a smile.*] And yet this same "People's Messenger" can go on preaching that the masses ought to be elevated to higher conditions of life! But, bless my soul, if the "Messenger's" teaching is to be depended upon, this very raising up the masses would mean nothing more or less than setting them straightway upon the paths of depravity! Happily the theory that culture demoralises is only an old falsehood that our forefathers believed in and we have inherited. No, it is ignorance, poverty, ugly conditions of life, that do the devil's work! In a house which does not get aired and swept every day—my wife Katherine maintains that the floor ought to be scrubbed as well, but that is a debatable question—in such a house, let me tell you, people will lose within two or three years the power of thinking or acting in a moral manner. Lack of

oxygen weakens the conscience. And there must be a plentiful lack of oxygen in very many houses in this town, I should think, judging from the fact that the whole compact majority can be unconscientious enough to wish to build the town's prosperity on a quagmire of falsehood and deceit.

Asl. We cannot allow such a grave accusation to be flung at a citizen community.

A Citizen. I move that the Chairman direct the speaker to sit down.

Voices [*angrily*]. Hear, hear! Quite right! Make him sit down!

Dr. Sto. [*losing his self-control*]. Then I will go and shout the truth at every street corner! I will write it in other towns' newspapers! The whole country shall know what is going on here.

Hov. It almost seems as if Dr. Stockmann's intentions were to ruin the town.

Dr. Sto. Yes, my native town is so dear to me that I would rather ruin it than see it flourishing upon a lie.

Asl. This is really serious. [*Uproar and cat-calls.* Mrs. Stockmann *coughs, but to no purpose; her husband does not listen to her any longer.*]

Hov. [*shouting above the din.*] A man must be a public enemy to wish to ruin a whole community!

Dr. Sto. [*with growing fervour*]. What does the destruction of a community matter, I tell you! All who live by lies ought to be exterminated like vermin! You will end by infecting the whole country; you will bring about such a state of things that the whole country will deserve to be ruined. And if things come to that pass, I shall say from the bottom of my heart: Let the whole country perish, let all thes people be exterminated!

Voices from the crowd. That talking like an out-and-out enemy the people!

Bill. There sounded the voice of th people, by all that's holy!

The whole crowd [*shouting*]. Ye yes! He is an enemy of the people He hates his country! He hates h own people!

Asl. Both as a citizen and as an in dividual, I am profoundly disturbed b what we have had to listen to. D Stockmann has shown himself in light I should never have dreamed o I am unhappily obliged to subscribe t the opinion which I have just hear my estimable fellow-citizens utter; an I propose that we should give expres sion to that opinion in a resolution. propose a resolution as follows: "Th meeting declares that it considers D Thomas Stockmann, Medical Officer the Baths, to be an enemy of th people." [*A storm of cheers and ap plause. A number of men surroun the* Doctor *and hiss him.* Mrs. Stock mann *and* Petra *have got up fro their seats.* Morten *and* Ejlif *a fighting the other schoolboys for his ing; some of their elders separa them.*]

Dr. Sto. [*to the men who are hissin him*]. Oh, you fools! I tell you that-

Asl. [*ringing his bell*]. We canno hear you now, Doctor. A formal vo is about to be taken; but, out of regar for personal feelings, it shall be b ballot and not verbal. Have you an clean paper, Mr. Billing?

Bill. I have both blue and white her

Asl. [*going to him*]. That will nicely; we shall get on more quick

at way. Cut it up into small strips -yes, that's it. [*To the meeting.*] Blue eans no; white means yes. I will me round myself and collect votes. PETER STOCKMANN *leaves the hall.* SLAKSEN *and one or two others go round the room with the slips of pa- er in their hats.*]

1ST CITIZEN [*to* HOVSTAD]. I say, hat has come to the Doctor? What re we to think of it?

HOV. Oh, you know how head- rong he is.

2ND CITIZEN [*to* BILLING]. Billing, ou go to their house—have you ever oticed if the fellow drinks?

BILL. Well I'm hanged if I know hat to say. There are always spirits n the table when you go.

3RD CITIZEN. I rather think he goes uite off his head sometimes.

1ST CITIZEN. I wonder if there is ny madness in his family?

BILL. I shouldn't wonder if there ere.

4TH CITIZEN. No, it is nothing more an sheer malice; he wants to get ven with somebody for something or her.

BILL. Well certainly he suggested a se in his salary on one occasion lately, nd did not get it.

THE CITIZENS [*together*]. Ah!—then is easy to understand how it is!

THE DRUNKEN MAN [*who has got mongst the audience again*]. I want blue one, I do! And I want a white ne too!

VOICES. It's that drunken chap gain! Turn him out!

MORTEN KIIL [*going up to* DR. TOCKMANN.] Well, Stockmann, do ou see what these monkey tricks of ours lead to?

DR. STO. I have done my duty.

MORTEN KIIL. What was that you said about the tanneries at Mölledal?

DR. STO. You heard well enough. I said they were the source of all the filth.

MORTEN KIIL. My tannery too?

DR. STO. Unfortunately your tan- nery is by far the worst.

MORTEN KIIL. Are you going to put that in the papers?

DR. STO. I shall conceal nothing.

MORTEN KIIL. That may cost you dear, Stockmann. [*Goes out.*]

A STOUT MAN [*going up to* CAPTAIN HORSTER, *without taking any notice of the ladies.*] Well, Captain, so you lend your house to enemies of the people?

HORS. I imagine I can do what I like with my own possessions, Mr. Vik.

THE STOUT MAN. Then you can have no objection to my doing the same with mine.

HORS. What do you mean, sir?

THE STOUT MAN. You shall hear from me in the morning. [*Turns his back on him and moves off.*]

PETRA. Was that not your owner, Captain Horster?

HORS. Yes, that was Mr. Vik the ship-owner.

ASL. [*with the voting-papers in his hands, gets up on to the platform and rings his bell.*] Gentlemen, allow me to announce the result. By the votes of every one here except one person—

A YOUNG MAN. That is the drunk chap!

ASL. By the votes of every one here except a tipsy man, this meeting of citizens declares Dr. Thomas Stock- mann to be an enemy of the people. [*Shouts and applause.*] Three cheers for our ancient and honourable citizen

community! [*Renewed applause.*] Three cheers for our able and energetic Mayor, who has so loyally suppressed the promptings of family feeling! [*Cheers.*] The meeting is dissolved. [*Gets down.*]

BILL. Three cheers for the Chairman!

THE WHOLE CROWD. Three cheers for Aslaksen! Hurrah!

DR. STO. My hat and coat, Petra! Captain, have you room on your ship for passengers to the New World?

HORS. For you and yours we will make room, Doctor.

DR. STO. [*as* PETRA *helps him into his coat*]. Good. Come, Katherine! Come, boys!

MRS. STO. [*in an undertone*]. Thomas, dear, let us go out by the back way.

DR. STO. No back ways for me, Katherine. [*Raising his voice.*] You will hear more of this enemy of the people, before he shakes the dust off his shoes upon you! I am not so forgiving as a certain Person; I do not say: "I forgive you, for ye know not what ye do."

ASL. [*shouting*]. That is a blasphemous comparison, Dr. Stockmann!

BILL. It is, by God. It's dreadful for an earnest man to listen to.

A COARSE VOICE. Threatens us now, does he!

OTHER VOICES [*excitedly*]. Let's go and break his windows! Duck him in the fjord!

ANOTHER VOICE. Blow your horn, Evensen! Pip, pip!

[*Horn-blowing, hisses, and wild cries.* DR. STOCKMANN *goes out through the hall with his family,* HORSTER *elbowing a way for them.*]

THE WHOLE CROWD [*howling after as they go.*] Enemy of the People! Enemy of the People!

BILL. [*as he puts his papers together*]. Well, I'm damned if I go and drink toddy with the Stockmanns tonight!

[*The crowd press towards the exit. The uproar continues outside; shouts of* "Enemy of the People!" *are heard from without.*]

ACT V

SCENE.—DR. STOCKMANN'S *study. Bookcases, and cabinets containing specimens, line the walls. At the back is a door leading to the hall; in the foreground on the left, a door leading to the sitting-room. In the right-hand wall are two windows, of which all the panes are broken. The* DOCTOR'S *desk, littered with books and papers, stands in the middle of the room, which is in disorder. It is morning.* DR. STOCKMANN *in dressing-gown, slippers and a smoking-cap, is bending down and raking with an umbrella under one of the cabinets. After a little while he rakes out a stone.*

DR. STO. [*calling through the open sitting-room door.*] Katherine, I have found another one.

MRS. STO. [*from the sitting-room*] Oh, you will find a lot more yet, I expect.

DR. STO. [*adding the stone to a heap of others on the table*]. I shall treasure these stones as relics. Ejlif and Morten shall look at them every day and when they are grown up they shall inherit them as heirlooms. [*Rakes about under a bookcase.*] Hasn't—what the deuce is her name?—the girl you know—hasn't she been to fetch the glazier yet?

MRS. STO. [*coming in*]. Yes, but he id he didn't know if he would be able come to-day.

DR. STO. You will see he won't dare come.

MRS. STO. Well, that is just what andine thought—that he didn't dare , on account of the neighbours. [*Calls to the sitting-room.*] What is it you ant, Randine? Give it to me. [*Goes , and comes out again directly.*] Here a letter for you, Thomas.

DR. STO. Let me see it. [*Opens and ads it.*] Ah!—of course.

MRS. STO. Who is it from?

DR. STO. From the landlord. No- e to quit.

MRS. STO. Is it possible? Such a ce man—

DR. STO. [*looking at the letter*]. oesn't like doing it, but dare not do herwise—on account of his fellow- izens—out of regard for public opin- n. Is in a dependent position—dare t offend certain influential men—

MRS. STO. There, you see, Thomas!

DR. STO. Yes, yes, I see well ough; the whole lot of them in the wn are cowards; not a man among em dares do anything for fear of the ners. [*Throws the letter on to the ble.*] But it doesn't matter to us, atherine. We are going to sail away the New World, and—

MRS. STO. But, Thomas, are you sure are well advised to take this step?

DR. STO. Are you suggesting that I ould stay here, where they have pil- ied me as an enemy of the people— anded me—broken my windows! d just look here, Katherine—they ve torn a great rent in my black users too!

MRS. STO. Oh, dear!—and they are the best pair you have got!

DR. STO. You should never wear your best trousers when you go out to fight for freedom and truth. It is not that I care so much about the trousers, you know; you can always sew them up again for me. But that the common herd should dare to make this attack on me, as if they were my equals —that is what I cannot, for the life of me, swallow!

MRS. STO. There is no doubt they have behaved very ill to you, Thomas; but is that sufficient reason for our leaving our native country for good and all?

DR. STO. If we went to another town, do you suppose we should not find the common people just as insolent as they are here? Depend upon it, there is not much to choose between them. Oh, well, let the curs snap—that is not the worst part of it. The worst is that, from one end of this country to the other, every man is the slave of his Party. Although, as far as that goes, I daresay it is not much better in the free West either; the compact majority, and liberal public opinion, and all that infernal old bag of tricks are probably rampant there too. But there things are done on a larger scale, you see. They may kill you, but they won't put you to death by slow torture. They don't squeeze a free man's soul in a vice, as they do here. And, if need be, one can live in solitude. [*Walks up and down.*] If only I knew where there was a virgin forest as a small South Sea island for sale, cheap—

MRS. STO. But think of the boys, Thomas.

DR. STO. [*standing still*]. What a

strange woman you are, Katherine! Would you prefer to have the boys grow up in a society like this? You saw for yourself last night that half the population are out of their minds; and if the other half have not lost their senses, it is because they are mere brutes, with no sense to lose.

MRS. STO. But, Thomas dear, the imprudent things you said had something to do with it, you know.

DR. STO. Well, isn't what I said perfectly true? Don't they turn every idea topsy-turvy? Don't they make a regular hotch-potch of right and wrong? Don't they say that the things I know are true, are lies? The craziest part of it all is the fact of these "liberals," men of full age, going about in crowds imagining that they are the broadminded party! Did you ever hear anything like it, Katherine!

MRS. STO. Yes, yes, it's mad enough of them, certainly; but—[PETRA *comes in from the sitting-room*]. Back from school already?

PETRA. Yes. I have been given notice of dismissal.

MRS. STO. Dismissal?

DR. STO. You too?

PETRA. Mrs. Busk gave me my notice; so I thought it was best to go at once.

DR. STO. You were perfectly right, too!

MRS. STO. Who would have thought Mrs. Busk was a woman like that!

PETRA. Mrs. Busk isn't a bit like that, mother; I saw quite plainly how it hurt her to do it. But she didn't dare do otherwise, she said; and so I got my notice.

DR. STO. [*laughing and rubbing his hands*]. She didn't dare do otherwise, either! It's delicious!

MRS. STO. Well, after the dreadful scenes last night—

PETRA. It was not only that. Just listen to this, father!

DR. STO. Well?

PETRA. Mrs. Busk showed me no less than three letters she received this morning—

DR. STO. Anonymous, I suppose?

PETRA Yes.

DR. STO. Yes, because they didn't dare to risk signing their names, Katherine!

PETRA. And two of them were to the effect that a man, who has been our guest here, was declaring last night at the Club that my views on various subjects are extremely emancipated—

DR. STO. You did not deny that, I hope?

PETRA. No, you know I wouldn't. Mrs. Busk's own views are tolerably emancipated, when we are alone together; but now that this report about me is being spread, she dare not keep me on any longer.

MRS. STO. And some one who had been a guest of ours! That shows you the return you get for your hospitality, Thomas!

DR. STO. We won't live in such a disgusting hole any longer. Pack up as quickly as you can, Katherine; the sooner we can get away, the better.

MRS. STO. Be quiet—I think I hear some one in the hall. See who it is, Petra.

PETRA [*opening the door*]. Oh, it's you, Captain Horster! Do come in.

HORS. [*coming in*]. Good morning. I thought I would just come in and see how you were.

DR. STO. [*shaking his hand.*] Thanks

it is really kind of you.

MRS. STO. And thank you, too, for ping us through the crowd, Captain orster.

PETRA. How did you manage to get me again?

HORS. Oh, somehow or other. I am rly strong, and there is more sound n fury about these folk.

DR. STO. Yes, isn't their swinish vardice astonishing? Look here, I l show you something! There are the stones they have thrown through windows. Just look at them! I'm nged if there are more than two de-tly large bits of hardstone in the ole heap; the rest are nothing but avel—wretched little things. And they stood out there bawling and earing that they would do me some lence; but as for *doing* anything—n don't see much of that in this vn.

HORS. Just as well for you this ne, doctor!

DR. STO. True enough. But it makes e angry all the same; because if ne day it should be a question of a ional fight in real earnest, you will that public opinion will be in fa-ur of taking to one's heels, and the mpact majority will turn tail like a k of sheep, Captain Horster. That what is so mournful to think of; it es me so much concern, that—. No, il take it, it is ridiculous to care out it! They have called me an my of the people, so an enemy of people let me be!

MRS. STO. You will never be that, omas.

DR. STO. Don't swear to that, Kath-ne. To be called an ugly name may e the same effect as a pin-scratch in the lung. And that hateful name—I can't get quit of it. It is sticking here in the pit of my stomach, eating into me like a corrosive acid. And no magnesia will remove it.

PETRA. Bah!—you should only laugh at them, father.

HORS. They will change their minds some day, Doctor.

MRS. STO. Yes, Thomas, as sure as you are standing here.

DR. STO. Perhaps, when it is too late. Much good may it do them! They may wallow in their filth then and rue the day when they drove a patriot into exile. When do you sail, Captain Horster?

HORS. Hm!—that was just what I had come to speak about—

DR. STO. Why, has anything gone wrong with the ship?

HORS. No; but what has happened is that I am not to sail in it.

PETRA. Do you mean that you have been dismissed from your command?

HORS. [*smiling*]. Yes, that's just it.

PETRA. You too.

MRS. STO. There, you see, Thomas!

DR. STO. And that for the truth's sake! Oh, if I had thought such a thing possible—

HORS. You mustn't take it to heart; I shall be sure to find a job with some ship-owner or other, elsewhere.

DR. STO. And that is this man Vik—a wealthy man, independent of every one and everything—! Shame on him!

HORS. He is quite an excellent fellow otherwise; he told me himself he would willingly have kept me on, if only he had dared—

DR. STO. But he didn't dare? No, of course not.

HORS. It is not such an easy mat-

ter, he said, for a party man—

DR. STO. The worthy man spoke the truth. A party is like a sausage machine; it mashes up all sorts of heads together into the same mincemeat—fatheads and blockheads, all in one mash!

MRS. STO. Come, come, Thomas, dear!

PETRA [*to* HORSTER]. If only you had not come home with us, things might not have come to this pass.

HORS. I do not regret it.

PETRA. [*holding out her hand to him*]. Thank you for that!

HORS. [*to* DR. STOCKMANN]. And so what I came to say was that if you are determined to go away, I have thought of another plan—

DR. STO. That's splendid!—if only we can get away at once.

MRS. STO. Hush!—wasn't that some one knocking?

PETRA. That is uncle, surely.

DR. STO. Aha! [*Calls out.*] Come in!

MRS. STO. Dear Thomas, promise me definitely—

[PETER STOCKMANN *comes in from the hall.*]

PETER. Oh, you are engaged. In that case, I will—

DR. STO. No, no, come in.

PETER. But I wanted to speak to you alone.

MRS. STO. We will go into the sitting-room in the meanwhile.

HORS. And I will look in again later.

DR. STO. No, go in there with them, Captain Horster; I want to hear more about—

HORS. Very well, I will wait, then. [*He follows* MRS. STOCKMANN *and* PETRA *into the sitting-room.*]

DR. STO. I daresay you find rather draughty here to-day. Put you hat on.

PETER. Thank you, if I may. [*Do so.*] I think I caught cold last night I stood and shivered—

DR. STO. Really? I found it warm enough.

PETER. I regret that it was not in my power to prevent those excesses last night.

DR. STO. Have you anything particular to say to me besides that?

PETER [*taking a big letter from his pocket.*] I have this document for you from the Baths Committee.

DR. STO. My dismissal?

PETER. Yes, dating from to-day. [*Lays the letter on the table.*] It gives us pain to do it; but, to speak frankly, we dared not do otherwise on account of public opinion.

DR. STO. [*smiling*]. Dared not? I seem to have heard that word before to-day.

PETER. I must beg you to understand your position clearly. For the future you must not count on any practice whatever in the town.

DR. STO. Devil take the practice! But why are you so sure of that?

PETER. The Householders' Association is circulating a list from house to house. All right-minded citizens are being called upon to give up employing you; and I can assure you that not a single head of a family will risk refusing his signature. They simply dare not.

DR. STO. No, no; I don't doubt it. But what then?

PETER. If I might advise you, it would be best to leave the place for a little while—

Dr. Sto. Yes, the propriety of leav-
g the place *has* occurred to me.

Peter. Good. And then, when you
ve had six months to think things
er, if, after mature consideration,
u can persuade yourself to write a
w words of regret, acknowledging
ur error—

Dr. Sto. I might have my appoint-
nt restored to me, do you mean?

Peter. Perhaps. It is not at all im-
ssible.

Dr. Sto. But what about public
inion, then? Surely you would not
re to do it on account of public
eling.

Peter. Public opinion is an ex-
emely mutable thing. And, to be
ite candid with you, it is a matter
great importance to us to have some
mission of that sort from you in
iting.

Dr. Sto. Oh, that's what you are
er, is it! I will just trouble you to
nember what I said to you lately
out foxy tricks of that sort!

Peter. Your position was quite dif-
ent then. At that time you had
son to suppose you had the whole
wn at your back—

Dr. Sto. Yes, and now I feel I have
whole town *on* my back—[*flaring*
]. I would not do it if I had the
il and his dam on my back—!
ver—never, I tell you!

Peter. A man with a family has no
ht to behave as you do. You have
right to do it, Thomas.

Dr. Sto. I have no right! There is
y one single thing in the world a
e man has no right to do. Do you
ow what that is?

Peter. No.

Dr. Sto. Of course you don't, but I will tell you. A free man has no right to soil himself with filth; he has no right to behave in a way that would justify his spitting in his own face.

Peter. This sort of things sounds extremely plausible, of course; and if there were no other explanation for your obstinacy—. But as it happens that there is.

Dr. Sto. What do you mean?

Peter. You understand very well what I mean. But, as your brother and as a man of discretion, I advise you not to build too much upon expectations and prospects that may so very easily fail you.

Dr. Sto. What in the world is all this about?

Peter. Do you really ask me to believe that you are ignorant of the terms of Mr. Kiil's will?

Dr. Sto. I know that the small amount he possesses is to go to an institution for indigent old work-people. How does that concern me?

Peter. In the first place, it is by no means a small amount that is in question. Mr. Kiil is a fairly wealthy man.

Dr. Sto. I had no notion of that!

Peter. Hm!—hadn't you really? Then I suppose you had no notion, either, that a considerable portion of his wealth will come to your children, you and your wife having a life-rent of the capital. Has he never told you so?

Dr. Sto. Never, on my honour! Quite the reverse; he has consistently done nothing but fume at being so unconscionably heavily taxed. But are you perfectly certain of this, Peter?

Peter. I have it from an absolutely reliable course.

DR. STO. Then, thank God, Katherine is provided for—and the children too! I must tell her this at once—[*calls out*] Katherine, Katherine!

PETER [*restraining him*]. Hush, don't say a word yet!

MRS. STO. [*opening the door.*] What is the matter?

DR. STO. Oh, nothing, nothing; you can go back. [*She shuts the door.* DR. STOCKMANN *walks up and down in his excitement.*] Provided for!—Just think of it, we are all provided for! And for life! What a blessed feeling it is to know one is provided for!

PETER. Yes, but that is just exactly what you are not. Mr. Kiil can alter his will any day he likes.

DR. STO. But he won't do that, my dear Peter. The "Badger" is much too delighted at my attack on you and your wise friends.

PETER [*starts and looks intently at him.*] Ah, that throws a light on various things.

DR. STO. What things?

PETER. I see that the whole thing was a combined manœuvre on your part and his. These violent, reckless attacks that you have made against the leading men of the town, under the pretence that it was in the name of truth—

DR. STO. What about them?

PETER. I see that they were nothing else than the stipulated price for that vindictive old man's will.

DR. STO. [*almost speechless*]. Peter—you are the most disgusting plebeian I have ever met in all my life.

PETER. All is over between us. Your dismissal is irrevocable—we have a weapon against you now. [*Goes out.*]

DR. STO. For shame! For shame! [*Calls out.*] Katherine, you must have the floor scrubbed after him! Let—what's her name—devil take it, the girl who has always got soot on her nose—

MRS. STO. [*in the sitting-room*]. Hush, Thomas, be quiet!

PETRA [*coming to the door*]. Father, grandfather is here, asking if he may speak to you alone.

DR. STO. Certainly he may. [*Going to the door.*] Come in, Mr. Kiil. [MORTEN KIIL *comes in.* DR. STOCKMANN *shuts the door after him.*] What can I do for you? Won't you sit down?

MORTEN KIIL. I won't sit. [*Looks around.*] You look very comfortable here to-day, Thomas.

DR. STO. Yes, don't we!

MORTEN KIIL. Very comfortable—plenty of fresh air. I should think you have got enough to-day of that oxygen you were talking about yesterday. Your conscience must be in splendid order to-day, I should think.

DR. STO. It is.

MORTEN KIIL. So I should think. [*Taps his chest.*] Do you know what I have got here?

DR. STO. A good conscience, too, I hope.

MORTEN KIIL. Bah!—No, it is something better than that. [*He takes a thick pocket-book from his breast pocket, opens it, and displays a packet of papers.*]

DR. STO. [*looking at him in astonishment*]. Shares in the Baths?

MORTEN KIIL. They were not difficult to get to-day.

DR. STO. And you have been buying—?

MORTEN KIIL. As many as I could pay for.

DR. STO. But, my dear Mr. Kiil—

nsider the state of the Baths' affairs!

MORTEN KIIL. If you behave like a asonable man, you can soon set the aths on their feet again.

DR. STO. Well, you can see for your-lf that I have done all I can, but—. ey are all mad in this town!

MORTEN KIIL. You said yesterday at the worst of this pollution came om my tannery. If that is true, then y grandfather and my father before e, and I myself, for many years past, ve been poisoning the town like ree destroying angels. Do you think am going to sit quiet under that re-oach?

DR. STO. Unfortunately I am afraid u will have to.

MORTEN KIIL. No, thank you. I n jealous of my name and reputation. ey call me "the Badger," I am told. badger is a kind of pig, I believe; t I am not going to give them the ght to call me that. I mean to live d die a clean man.

DR. STO. And how are you going to about it?

MORTEN KIIL. You shall cleanse me, omas.

DR. STO. I!

MORTEN KIIL. Do you know what ney I have bought these shares with? , of course you can't know—but I ll tell you. It is the money that atherine and Petra and the boys will ve when I am gone. Because I ve been able to save a little bit after , you know.

DR. STO. [*flaring up*]. And you ve gone and taken Katherine's ney for *this!*

MORTEN KIIL. Yes, the whole of the ney is invested in the Baths now. nd now I just want to see whether you are quite stark, staring mad, Thomas! If you still make out that these animals and other nasty things of that sort come from my tannery, it will be exactly as if you were to flay broad strips of skin from Katherine's body, and Petra's, and the boy's; and no decent man would do that—unless he were mad.

DR. STO. [*walking up and down*]. Yes, but I *am* mad; I *am* mad!

MORTEN KIIL. You cannot be so absurdly mad as all that, when it is a question of your wife and children.

DR. STO. [*standing still in front of him.*] Why couldn't you consult me about it, before you went and bought all that trash?

MORTEN KIIL. What is done cannot be undone.

DR. STO. [*walks about uneasily*]. If only I were not so certain about it—! But I am absolutely convinced that I am right.

MORTEN KIIL [*weighing the pocket-book in his hand*]. If you stick to your mad idea, this won't be worth much, you know. [*Puts the pocket-book in his pocket.*]

DR. STO. But, hang it all! it might be possible for science to discover some prophylactic, I should think —or some antidote of some kind—

MORTEN KIIL. To kill these animals, do you mean?

DR. STO. Yes, or to make them innocous.

MORTEN KIIL. Couldn't you try some rat's-bane?

DR. STO. Don't talk nonsense! They all say it is only imagination, you know. Well, let it go at that! Let them have their own way about it! Haven't the ignorant, narrow-minded

curs reviled me as an enemy of the people?—and haven't they been ready to tear the clothes off my back, too?

MORTEN KIIL. And broken all your windows to pieces!

DR. STO. And then there is my duty to my family. I must talk it over with Katherine; she is great on those things.

MORTEN KIIL. That is right; be guided by a reasonable woman's advice.

DR. STO. [*advancing towards him*]. To think you could do such a preposterous thing! Risking Katherine's money in this way, and putting me in such a horribly painful dilemma! When I look at you, I think I see the devil himself—.

MORTEN KIIL. Then I had better go. But I must have an answer from you before two o'clock—yes or no. If it is no, the shares go to a charity, and that this very day.

DR. STO. And what does Katherine get?

MORTEN KIIL. Not a halfpenny. [*The door leading to the hall opens, and* HOVSTAD *and* ASLAKSEN *make their appearance.*] Look at those two!

DR. STO. [*staring at them*]. What the devil!—have *you* actually the face to come into my house?

HOV. Certainly.

ASL. We have something to say to you, you see.

MORTEN KIIL [*in a whisper*]. Yes or no—before two o'clock.

ASL. [*glancing at* HOVSTAD]. Aha! [MORTEN KIIL *goes out.*]

DR. STO. Well, what do you want with me? Be brief.

HOV. I can quite understand that you are annoyed with us for our attitude at the meeting yesterday—

DR. STO. Attitude, do you call it? Yes, it was a charming attitude! I call it weak, womanish—damnably shameful!

HOV. Call it what you like, we could not do otherwise.

DR. STO. You *dared* not do otherwise—isn't that it?

HOV. Well, if you like to put it that way.

ASL. But why did you not let us have word of it beforehand?—just a hint to Mr. Hovstad or to me?

DR. STO. A hint? Of what?

ASL. Of what was behind it all.

DR. STO. I don't understand you in the least.

ASL. [*with a confidential nod.*] Oh yes, you do, Dr. Stockmann.

HOV. It is no good making a mystery of it any longer.

DR. STO. [*looking first at one of them and then at the other*]. What the devil do you both mean?

ASL. May I ask if your father-in-law is not going round the town buying up all the shares in the Baths?

DR. STO. Yes, he has been buying Bath shares to-day; but—

ASL. It would have been more prudent to get some one else to do it—some one less nearly related to you.

HOV. And you should not have let your name appear in the affair. There was no need for anyone to know that the attack on the Baths came from you. You ought to have consulted me, Dr. Stockmann.

DR. STO. [*looks in front of him, then a light seems to dawn on him and he says in amazement*]: Are such things conceivable? Are such things possible?

ASL. [*with a smile*]. Evidently the

e. But it is better to use a little *esse,* you know.

Hov. And it is much better to have veral persons in a thing of that sort; cause the responsibility of each in-vidual is lessened, when there are ners with him.

Dr. Sto. [*composedly.*] Come to e point, gentlemen. What do you nt?

Asl. Perhaps Mr. Hovstad had tter—

Hov. No, you tell him, Aslaksen.

Asl. Well, the fact is that, now we ow the bearings of the whole affair, think we might venture to put the eople's Messenger" at your disposal.

Dr. Sto. Do you dare do that now? hat about public opinion? Are you t afraid of a storm breaking upon r heads?

Hov. We will try to weather it.

Asl. And you must be ready to go quickly on a new tack, Doctor. As on as your invective has done its rk—

Dr. Sto. Do you mean, as soon as father-in-law and I have got hold the shares at a low figure?

Hov. Your reasons for wishing to the control of the Baths are mainly entific, I take it.

Dr. Sto. Of course; it was for scien-ic reasons that I persuaded the old adger" to stand in with me in the tter. So we will tinker at the con-it-pipes a little, and dig up a little of the shore, and it shan't cost the vn a sixpence. That will be all right eh?

Hov. I think so—if you have the eople's Messenger" behind you.

Asl. The Press is a power in a free mmunity, Doctor.

Dr. Sto. Quite so. And so is public opinion. And you, Mr. Aslaksen—I suppose you will be answerable for the Householders' Association?

Asl. Yes, and for the Temperance Society. You may rely on that.

Dr. Sto. But, gentlemen—I really am ashamed to ask the question—but, what return do you—?

Hov. We should prefer to help you without any return whatever, believe me. But the "People's Messenger" is in rather a shaky condition; it doesn't go really well; and I should be very unwilling to suspend the paper now, when there is so much work to do here in the political way.

Dr. Sto. Quite so; that would be a great trial to such a friend of the people, as you are. [*Flares up.*] But I am an enemy of the people remember! [*Walks about the room.*] Where have I put my stick? Where the devil is my stick?

Hov. What's that.

Asl. Surely you never mean—?

Dr. Sto. [*standing still*]. And suppose I don't give you a single penny of all I get out of it? Money is not very easy to get out of us rich folk, please to remember!

Hov. And you please to remember that this affair of the shares can be represented in two ways!

Dr. Sto. Yes, and you are just the man to do it. If I don't come to the rescue of the "People's Messenger," you will certainly take an evil view of the affair; you will hunt me down, I can well imagine—pursue me—try to throttle me as a dog does a hare.

Hov. It is a natural law; every animal must fight for its own livelihood.

ASL. And get its food where it can, you know.

DR. STO. [*walking about the room*]. Then you go and look for yours in the gutter; because I am going to show you which is the strongest animal of us three. [*Finds an umbrella and brandishes it above his head.*] Ah, now—!

HOV. You are surely not going to use violence!

ASL. Take care what you are doing with that umbrella.

DR. STO. Out of the window with you, Mr. Hovstad!

HOV. [*edging to the door*]. Are you quite mad!

DR. STO. Out of the window, Mr. Aslaksen! Jump, I tell you! You will have to do it, sooner or later.

ASL. [*running round the writing-table*]. Moderation, Doctor—I am a delicate man—I can stand so little—[*calls out*] help, help!

[MRS. STOCKMANN, PETRA *and* HORSTER *come in from the sitting-room.*]

MRS. STO. Good gracious, Thomas! What is happening?

DR. STO. [*brandishing the umbrella*]. Jump out, I tell you! Out into the gutter!

HOV. An assault on an unoffending man! I call you to witness, Captain Horster. [*Hurries out through the hall.*]

ASL. [*irresolutely*]. If I only knew the way about here—. [*Steals out through the sitting-room.*]

MRS. STO. [*holding her husband back*]. Control yourself, Thomas!

DR. STO. [*throwing down the umbrella*]. Upon my soul, they have escaped after all.

MRS. STO. What did they want you to do?

DR. STO. I will tell you later on; I have something else to think about now. [*Goes to the table and writes something on a calling-card.*] Look there, Katherine; what is written there?

MRS. STO. Three big No's; what does that mean?

DR. STO. I will tell you that too later on. [*Holds out the card to* PETRA.] There, Petra; tell sooty-face to run over to the "Badger's" with that as quickly as she can. Hurry up! [PETRA *takes the card and goes out to the hall.*]

DR. STO. Well, I think I have had a visit from every one of the devil's messengers to-day! But now I am going to sharpen my pen till they can feel its point; I shall dip it in venom and gall; I shall hurl my ink-pot at their heads!

MRS. STO. Yes, but we are going away, you know, Thomas.

[PETRA *comes back.*]

DR. STO. Well?

PETRA. She has gone with it.

DR. STO. Good.—Going away, did you say? No, I'll be hanged if we are going away! We are going to stay where we are, Katherine!

PETRA. Stay here?

MRS. STO. Here, in the town?

DR. STO. Yes, here. This is the field of battle—this is where the fight will be. This is where I shall triumph! As soon as I have had my trousers sewn up I shall go out and look for another house. We must have a roof over our heads for the winter.

HORS. That you shall have in my house.

DR. STO. Can I?

HORS. Yes, quite well. I have enty of room, and I am almost never home.

MRS. STO. How good of you, Cap-n Horster!

PETRA. Thank you!

DR. STO. [*grasping his hand*]. Thank u, thank you! That is one trouble er! Now I can set to work in earn- at once. There is an endless amount things to look through, here Kath-ine! Luckily I shall have all my ne at my disposal; because I have en dismissed from the Baths, you ow.

MRS. STO. [*with a sigh*]. Oh, yes, I pected that.

DR. STO. And they want to take my actice away from me too. Let them! ave got the poor people to fall back on, anyway—those that don't pay ything; and, after all, they need me st, too. But, by Jove, they will ve to listen to me; I shall preach to em in season and out of season, as says somewhere.

MRS. STO. But, dear Thomas, I uld have thought events had showed u what use it is to preach.

DR. STO. You are really ridiculous, atherine. Do you want me to let my-f be beaten off the field by public inion and the compact majority and that devilry? No, thank you! And at I want to do is so simple and ar and straightforward. I only want drum into the heads of these curs e fact that the liberals are the most idious enemies of freedom—that rty programmes strangle every ung and vigorous truth—that con-erations of expediency turn mor-ty and justice upside down—and t they will end by making life here unbearable. Don't you think, Captain Horster, that I ought to be able to make people understand that?

HORS. Very likely; I don't know much about such things myself.

DR. STO. Well, look here—I will explain! It is the party leaders that must be exterminated. A party leader is like a wolf, you see—like a voracious wolf. He requires a certain number of smaller victims to prey upon every year, if he is to live. Just look at Hovstad and Aslaksen! How many smaller victims have they not put an end to—or at any rate maimed and mangled until they are fit for nothing except to be householders or subscribers to the "People's Messenger"! [*Sits down on the edge of the table.*] Come here, Katherine—look how beautifully the sun shines to-day! And this lovely spring air I am drinking in!

MRS. STO. Yes, if only we could live on sunshine and spring air, Thomas.

DR. STO. Oh, you will have to pinch and save a bit—then we shall get along. That gives me very little concern. What is much worse is, that I know of no one who is liberal-minded and high-minded enough to venture to take up my work after me.

PETRA. Don't think about that, father; you have plenty of time before you.—Hullo, here are the boys already!

[EJLIF *and* MORTEN *come in from the sitting-room.*]

MRS. STO. Have you got a holiday?

MOR. No; but we were fighting with the other boys between lessons—

EJL. That isn't true; it was the other boys were fighting with us.

MOR. Well, and then Mr. Rörlund

said we had better stay at home for a day or two.

DR. STO. [*snapping his fingers and getting up from the table*]. I have it! I have it, by Jove! You shall never set foot in the school again!

THE BOYS. No more school!

MRS. STO. But, Thomas—

DR. STO. Never, I say. I will educate you myself: that is to say, you shan't learn a blessed thing—

MOR. Hooray!

DR. STO. —but I will make liberal-minded and high-minded men of you. You must help me with that, Petra.

PETRA. Yes, father, you may be sure I will.

DR. STO. And my school shall be in the room where they insulted me and called me an enemy of the people. But we are too few as we are; I must have at least twelve boys to begin with.

MRS. STO. You will certainly never get them in this town.

DR. STO. We shall. [*To the boys.*] Don't you know any street urchins—regular ragamuffins —

MOR. Yes, father, I know lots!

DR. STO. That's capital! Bring me some specimens of them. I am going to experiment with curs, just for once; there may be some exceptional heads amongst them.

MOR. And what are we going to d when you have made liberal-minde and high-minded men of us?

DR. STO. Then you shall drive a the wolves out of the country, my boys

[EJLIF *looks rather doubtful abou it;* MORTEN *jumps about crying* "Hu rah!"]

MRS. STO. Let us hope it won't b the wolves that will drive you out c the country, Thomas.

DR. STO. Are you out of your min Katherine? Drive me out! Now— when I am the strongest man in th town!

MRS. STO. The strongest—now?

DR. STO. Yes, and I will go so fa as to say that now I am the stronge man in the whole world.

MOR. I say!

DR. STO. [*lowering his voice*]. Hush You mustn't say anything about it ye but I have made a great discovery.

MRS. STO. Another one?

DR. STO. Yes. [*Gathers them roun him, and says confidentially*]: It this, let me tell you—that the stron est man in the world is he who stan most alone.

MRS. STO. [*smiling and shaking h head*]. Oh, Thomas, Thomas!

PETRA [*encouragingly, as she grasp her father's hands*]. Father!

VOLUME IV.

A Doll's House

THE PERSON'S OF THE PLAY.

RVALD HELMER.

RA, *his wife.*

CTOR RANK.

S. LINDE.

LS KROGSTAD.

LMER'S THREE YOUNG CHILDREN.

NE, *their nurse.*

HOUSEMAID.

PORTER.

e action takes place in Helmer's house.

ACT I

SCENE—*A room furnished comfortly and tastefully but not extravagant. At the back, a door to the right ds to the entrance-hall, another to left leads to Helmer's study. Between the doors stands a piano. In the ddle of the left-hand wall is a door, beyond a window. Near the win- are a round table, armchairs and mall sofa. In the right-hand wall, the farther end, another door; and the same side, nearer the footlights, tove, two easy chairs and a rocking-ir; between the stove and the door, nall table. Engravings on the walls; abinet with china and other small ects; a small book-case with well-nd books. The floors are carpeted, a fire burns in the stove. It is ter.*

bell rings in the hall; shortly erwards the door is heard to open. ter NORA, *humming a tune and in h spirits. She is in out-door dress carries a number of parcels; these she lays on the table to the right. She leaves the outer door open after her, and through it is seen a* PORTER *who is carrying a Christmas Tree and a basket, which he gives to the* MAID *who has opened the door.*

NORA. Hide the Christmas Tree carefully, Helen. Be sure the children do not see it till this evening, when it is dressed. [*To the* PORTER, *taking out her purse.*] How much?

POR. Sixpence.

NORA. There is a shilling. No, keep the change. [*The* PORTER *thanks her, and goes out.* NORA *shuts the door. She is laughing to herself, as she takes off her hat and coat. She takes a packet of macaroons from her pocket and eats one or two; then goes cautiously to her husband's door and listens.*] Yes, he is in. [*Still humming, she goes to the table on the right.*]

HEL. [*calls out from his room*]. Is that my little lark twittering out there?

NORA [*busy opening some of the parcels*]. Yes, it is!

HEL. Is it my little squirrel bustling about?

NORA. Yes!

HEL. When did my squirrel come home?

NORA. Just now. [*Puts the bag of macaroons into her pocket and wipes her mouth.*] Come in here, Torvald, and see what I have bought.

HEL. Don't disturb me. [*A little later, he opens the door and looks into the room, pen in hand.*] Bought,

did you say? All these things? Has my little spendthrift been wasting money again?

NORA. Yes, but, Torvald, this year we really can let ourselves go a little. This is the first Christmas that we have not needed to economise.

HEL. Still, you know, we can't spend money recklessly.

NORA. Yes, Torvald, we may be a wee bit more reckless now, mayn't we? Just a tiny wee bit! You are going to have a big salary and earn lots and lots of money.

HEL. Yes, after the New Year; but then it will be a whole quarter before the salary is due.

NORA. Pooh! we can borrow till then.

HEL. Nora! [*Goes up to her and takes her playfully by the ear.*] The same little featherhead! Suppose, now, that I borrowed fifty pounds to-day, and you spent it all in the Christmas week, and then on New Year's Eve a slate fell on my head and killed me, and—

NORA [*putting her hands over his mouth*]. Oh! don't say such horrid things.

HEL. Still, suppose that happened, —what then?

NORA. If that were to happen, I don't suppose I should care whether I owed money or not.

HEL. Yes, but what about the people who had lent it?

NORA. They? Who would bother about them? I should not know who they were.

HEL. That is like a woman! But seriously, Nora, you know what I think about that. No debt, no borrowing. There can be no freedom or beauty about a home life that depends o borrowing and debt. We two have kep bravely on the straight road so fa and we will go on the same way fo the short time longer that there nee be any struggle.

NORA [*moving towards the stove*] As you please, Torvald.

HEL. [*following her*]. Come, com my little skylark must not droop he wings. What is this! Is my litt squirrel out of temper? [*Taking ou his purse.*] Nora, what do you thin I have got here?

NORA [*turning round quickly*] Money!

HEL. There you are. [*Gives he some money.*] Do you think I don know what a lot is wanted for hous keeping at Christmas-time?

NORA [*counting*]. Ten shillings— pound—two pounds! Thank you, thar you, Torvald; that will keep me goin for a long time.

HEL. Indeed it must.

NORA. Yes, yes, it will. But com here and let me show you what have bought. And all so cheap! Loo here is a new suit for Ivar, and sword; and a horse and a trump for Bob; and a doll and dolly's be stead for Emmy, —they are very plai but anyways she will soon break the in pieces. And here are dress-lengt and handkerchiefs for the maids; o Anne ought really to have somethi better.

HEL. And what is in this parce

NORA [*crying out*]. No, no! y mustn't see that till this evening.

HEL. Very well. But now tell m you extravagant little person, wh would you like for yourself?

NORA. For myself? Oh, I am sure don't want anything.

HEL. Yes, but you must. Tell me mething reasonable that you would rticularly like to have.

NORA. No, I really can't think of ything—unless, Torvald—

HEL. Well?

NORA [*playing with his coat buttons, d without raising her eyes to his*]. you really want to give me some- ing, you might—you might—

HEL. Well, out with it!

NORA [*speaking quickly*]. You might ve me money, Torvald. Only just much as you can afford; and then e of these days I will buy something th it.

HEL. But, Nora—

NORA. Oh, do! dear Torvald; please, ease do! Then I will wrap it up in autiful gilt paper and hang it on e Christmas Tree. Wouldn't that be n?

HEL. What are little people called at are always wasting money?

NORA. Spendthrifts—I know. Let us as you suggest, Torvald, and then shall have time to think what I most in want of. That is a very sible plan, isn't it?

HEL. [*smiling*]. Indeed it is—that is say, if you were really to save out the money I give you, and then lly buy something for yourself. But you spend it all on the housekeeping d any number of unnecessary things, n I merely have to pay up again.

NORA. Oh but, Torvald—

HEL. You can't deny it, my dear le Nora. [*Puts his arm around her ist.*] It's a sweet little spendthrift, she uses up a deal of money. One would hardly believe how expensive such little persons are!

NORA. It's a shame to say that. I do really save all I can.

HEL. [*laughing*]. That's very true,—all you can. But you can't save anything!

NORA [*smiling quietly and happily*]. You haven't any idea how many expenses we skylarks and squirrels have Torvald.

HEL. You are an odd little soul. Very like your father. You always find some new way of wheedling money out of me, and, as soon as you have got it, it seems to melt in your hands. You never know where it has gone. Still, one must take you as you are. It is in the blood; for indeed it is true that you can inherit these things, Nora.

NORA. Ah, I wish I had inherited many of papa's qualities.

HEL. And I would not wish you to be anything but just what you are, my sweet little skylark. But, do you know, it strikes me that you are looking rather—what shall I say—rather uneasy to-day?

NORA. Do I?

HEL. You do, really. Look straight at me.

NORA [*looks at him*]. Well?

HEL. [*wagging his finger at her*]. Hasn't Miss Sweet-Tooth been breaking rules in town to-day?

NORA. No; what makes you think that?

HEL. Hasn't she paid a visit to the confectioner's?

NORA. No, I assure you, Torvald—

HEL. Not been nibbling sweets?

NORA. No, certainly not.

HEL. Not even taken a bite at a macaroon or two?

NORA. No, Torvald, I assure you really—

HEL. There, there, of course I was only joking.

NORA [*going to the table on the right*]. I should not think of going against your wishes.

HEL. No, I am sure of that; besides, you gave me your word—[*Going up to her*]. Keep your little Christmas secrets to yourself, my darling. They will all be revealed to-night when the Christmas Tree is lit, no doubt.

NORA. Did you remember to invite Doctor Rank?

HEL. No. But there is no need; as a matter of course he will come to dinner with us. However, I will ask him when he comes in this morning. I have ordered some good wine. Nora, you can't think how I am looking forward to this evening.

NORA. So am I! And how the children will enjoy themselves, Torvald!

HEL. It is splendid to feel that one has a perfectly safe appointment, and a big enough income. It's delightful to think of, isn't it?

NORA. It's wonderful!

HEL. Do you remember last Christmas? For a full three weeks beforehand you shut yourself up every evening till long after midnight, making ornaments for the Christmas Tree and all the other fine things that were to be a surprise to us. It was the dullest three weeks I ever spent!

NORA. I didn't find it dull.

HEL. [*smiling.*] But there was precious little result, Nora.

NORA. Oh, you shouldn't tease me about that again. How could I help the cat's going in and tearing everything to pieces?

HEL. Of course you couldn't, poor little girl. You had the best of intentions to please us all, and that's the main thing. But it is a good thing that our hard times are over.

NORA. Yes, it is really wonderful.

HEL. This time I needn't sit here and be dull all alone, and you needn't ruin your dear eyes and your pretty little hands—

NORA [*clapping her hands*]. No, Torvald, I needn't any longer, need I? It's wonderfully lovely to hear you say so! [*Taking his arm.*] Now I will tell you how I have been thinking we ought to arrange things, Torvald. As soon as Christmas is over— [*A bell rings in the hall.*] There's the bell. [*She tidies the room a little.*] There's someone at the door. What a nuisance!

HEL. If it is a caller, remember I am not at home.

MAID [*in the doorway*]. A lady to see you, ma'am,—a stranger.

NORA. Ask her to come in.

MAID [*to* HELMAR]. The doctor came at the same time, sir.

HEL. Did he go straight into my room?

MAID. Yes, sir.

[HEL. *goes into his room. The* MAID *ushers in* MRS. LINDE, *who is in travelling dress, and shuts the door.*]

MRS. L. [*in a dejected and timid voice*]. How do you do, Nora?

NORA [*doubtfully*]. How do you do—

MRS. L. You don't recognise me, I suppose.

NORA. No, I don't know—yes, to be sure, I seem to— [*Suddenly.*] Yes!

ıristine! Is it really you?

MRS. L. Yes, it is I.

NORA. Christine! To think of my t recognising you! And yet how uld I— [*In a gentle voice.*] How u have altered, Christine!

MRS. L. Yes, I have indeed. In nine, ı long years—

NORA. Is it so long since we met? suppose it is. The last eight years ve been a happy time for me, I can l you. And so now you have come o the town, and have taken this ıg journey in winter—that was ıcky of you.

MRS. L. I arrived by steamer this ›rning.

NORA. To have some fun at Christ-ıs-time, of course. How delightful! e will have such fun together! But ke off your things. You are not cold, ıope. [*Helps her.*] Now we will sit wn by the stove, and be cosy. No, ke this arm-chair; I will sit here in rocking-chair. [*Takes her hands*]. w you look like your old self again; was only the first moment— You are little paler, Christine, and perhaps ittle thinner.

MRS. L. And much, much older, ra.

NORA. Perhaps a little older; very, y little; certainly not much. [*Stops ddenly and speaks seriously.*] What houghtless creature I am, chattering ay like this. My poor, dear Chris-e, do forgive me.

MRS. L. What do you mean, Nora?

NORA [*gently*]. Poor Christine, you a widow.

MRS. L. Yes; it is three years ago v.

NORA. Yes, I knew; I saw it in the ›ers. I assure you, Christine, I meant ever so often to write to you at the time, but I always put it off and something always prevented me.

MRS. L. I quite understand, dear.

NORA. It was very bad of me, Christine. Poor thing, how you must have suffered. And he left you nothing.

MRS. L. No.

NORA. And no children?

MRS. L. No.

NORA. Nothing at all, then?

MRS. L. Not even any sorrow or grief to live upon.

NORA [*looking incredulously at her*]. But, Christine, is that possible?

MRS. L. [*smiles sadly and strokes her hair*]. It sometimes happens, Nora.

NORA. So you are quite alone. How dreadfully sad that must be. I have three lovely children. You can't see them just now, for they are out with their nurse. But now you must tell me all about it.

MRS. L. No, no; I want to hear about you.

NORA. No, you must begin. I mustn't be selfish to-day; to-day I must only think of your affairs. But there is one thing I must tell you. Do you know we have just had a great piece of good luck?

MRS. L. No, what is it?

NORA. Just fancy, my husband has been made manager of the Bank!

MRS. L. Your husband? What good luck!

NORA. Yes, tremendous! A barrister's profession is such an uncertain thing, especially if he won't undertake unsavoury cases; and naturally Torvald has never been willing to do that, and I quite agree with him. You may imagine how pleased we are! He is to

take up his work in the Bank at the New Year, and then he will have a big salary and lots of commissions. For the future we can live quite differently —we can do just as we like. I feel so relieved and so happy, Christine! It will be splendid to have heaps of money and not need to have any anxiety, won't it?

MRS. L. Yes, anyhow I think it would be delightful to have what one needs.

NORA. No, not only what one needs, but heaps and heaps of money.

MRS. L. [*smiling*]. Nora, Nora, haven't you learnt sense yet? In our school-days you were a great spendthrift.

NORA [*laughing*]. Yes, that is what Torvald says now. [*Wags her finger at her.*] But "Nora, Nora" is not so silly as you think. We have not been in a position for me to waste money. We have both had to work.

MRS. L. You too?

NORA. Yes; odds and ends, needle-work, crochet-work, embroidery, and that kind of thing. [*Dropping her voice.*] And other things as well. You know Torvald left his office when we were married? There was no prospect of promotion there, and he had to try and earn more than before. But during the first year he overworked himself dreadfully. You see, he had to make money every way he could, and he worked early and late; but he couldn't stand it, and fell dreadfully ill, and the doctors said it was necessary for him to go south.

MRS. L. You spent a whole year in Italy, didn't you?

NORA. Yes. It was no easy matter to get away, I can tell you. It was just after Ivar was born; but naturally we had to go. It was a wonderfully beautiful journey, and it saved Torvald's life. But it cost a tremendous lot of money, Christine.

MRS. L. So I should think.

NORA. It cost about two hundred and fifty pounds. That's a lot, isn't it?

MRS. L. Yes, and in emergencies like that it is lucky to have the money.

NORA. I ought to tell you that we had it from papa.

MRS. L. Oh, I see. It was just about that time that he died, wasn't it?

NORA. Yes; and, just think of it, I couldn't go and nurse him. I was expecting little Ivar's birth every day, and I had my poor sick Torvald to look after. My dear, kind father—I never saw him again, Christine. That was the saddest time I have known since our marriage.

MRS. L. I know how fond you were of him. And then you went off to Italy?

NORA. Yes; you see we had money then, and the doctors insisted on our going, so we started a month later.

MRS. L. And your husband came back quite well?

NORA. As sound as a bell!

MRS. L. But—the doctor?

NORA. What doctor?

MRS. L. I thought your maid said the gentleman who arrived here just as I did, was the doctor?

NOR. Yes, that was Doctor Rank, but he doesn't come here professionally. He is our greatest friend, and comes in at least once every day. No, Torvald has not had an hour's illness since then, and our children are strong and healthy and so am I. [*Jumps up and claps her hands.*] Christine! Christine

s good to be alive and happy!—But w horrid of me; I am talking of thing but my own affairs. [*Sits on a ol near her, and rests her arms on r knees.*] You mustn't be angry with . Tell me, is it really true that you l not love your husband? Why did u marry him?

MRS. L. My mother was alive then, d was bedridden and helpless, and had to provide for my two younger others; so I did not think I was tified in refusing his offer.

NORA. No, perhaps you were quite ht. He was rich at that time, then?

MRS. L. I believe he was quite well . But his business was a precarious e; and, when he died, it all went pieces and there was nothing left.

NORA. And then?—

MRS. L. Well, I had to turn my nd to anything I could find—first mall shop, then a small school, and on. The last three years have seemed e one long working-day, with no t. Now it is at an end, Nora. My r mother needs me no more, for she gone; and the boys do not need either; they have got situations l can shift for themselves.

NORA. What a relief you must feel

MRS. L. No, indeed; I only feel my unspeakably empty. No one to live any more. [*Gets up restlessly.*] t was why I could not stand the in my little backwater any longer. ope it may be easier here to find ething which will busy me and oc- y my thoughts. If only I could e the good luck to get some regular k—office work of some kind—

NORA. But, Christine, that is so htfully tiring, and you look tired out now. You had far better go away to some watering-place.

MRS. L. [*walking to the window*]. I have no father to give me money for a journey, Nora.

NORA [*rising*]. Oh, don't be angry with me.

MRS. L. [*going up to her*]. It is you that must not be angry with me, dear. The worst of a position like mine is that is makes one so bitter. No one to work for, and yet obliged to be always on the look-out for chances. One must live, and so one becomes selfish. When you told me of the happy turn your fortunes have taken—you will hardly believe it—I was delighted not so much on your account as on my own.

NORA. How do you mean?—Oh, I understand. You mean that perhaps Torvald could get you something to do.

MRS. L. Yes, that was what I was thinking of.

NORA. He must, Christine. Just leave it to me; I will broach the subject very cleverly—I will think of something that will please him very much. It will make me so happy to be of some use to you.

MRS. L. How kind you are, Nora, to be so anxious to help me! It is doubly kind in you, for you know so little of the burdens and troubles of life.

NORA. I—? I know so little of them?

MRS. L. [*smiling*]. My dear! Small household cares and that sort of thing! —You are a child, Nora.

NORA [*tosses her head and crosses the stage*]. You ought not to be so superior.

MRS. L. No?

NORA. You are just like the others. They all think that I am incapable of anything really serious—

MRS. L. Come, come—

NORA. —that I have gone through nothing in this world of cares.

MRS. L. But, my dear Nora, you have just told me all your troubles.

NORA. Pooh!—those were trifles. [*Lowering her voice.*] I have not told you the important thing.

MRS. L. The important thing? What do you mean?

NORA. You look down upon me altogether, Christine—but you ought not to. You are proud, aren't you, of having worked so hard and so long for your mother?

MRS. L. Indeed, I don't look down on any one. But it is true that I am both proud and glad to think that I was privileged to make the end of my mother's life almost free from care.

NORA. And you are proud to think of what you have done for your brothers.

MRS. L. I think I have the right to be.

NORA. I think so, too. But now, listen to this; I too have something to be proud and glad of.

MRS. L. I have no doubt you have. But what do you refer to?

NORA. Speak low. Suppose Torvald were to hear! He mustn't on any account—no one in the world must know, Christine, except you.

MRS. L. But what is it?

NORA. Come here. [*Pulls her down on the sofa beside her.*] Now I will show you that I too have something to be proud and glad of. It was I who saved Torvald's life.

MRS. L. "Saved"? How?

NORA. I told you about our trip to Italy. Torvald would never have recovered if he had not gone there—

MRS. L. Yes, but your father gave you the necessary funds.

NORA [*smiling*]. Yes, that is what Torvald and the others think, but—

MRS. L. But—

NORA. Papa didn't give us a shilling. It was I who procured the money.

MRS. L. You? All that large sum?

NORA. Two hundred and fifty pounds. What do you think of that?

MRS. L. But, Nora, how could you possibly do it? Did you win a prize in the Lottery?

NORA [*contemptuously*]. In the Lottery? There would have been no credit in that.

MRS. L. But where did you get it from, then?

NORA [*humming and smiling with an air of mystery*]. Hm, hm! Aha!

MRS. L. Because you couldn't have borrowed it.

NORA. Couldn't I? Why not?

MRS. L. No, a wife cannot borrow without her husband's consent.

NORA [*tossing her head*]. Oh, if it is a wife who has any head for business —a wife who has the wit to be a little bit clever—

MRS. L. I don't understand it at all, Nora.

NORA. There is no need you should. I never said I had borrowed the money. I may have got it some other way. [*Lies back on the sofa.*] Perhaps I got it from some other admirers. When anyone is as attractive as I am—

MRS. L. You are a mad creature.

NORA. Now, you know you're full of curiosity, Christine.

MRS. L. Listen to me, Nora dear

aven't you been a little bit imprunt?

NORA [*sits up straight*]. Is it imudent to save your husband's life?

MRS. L. It seems to me imprudent, thout his knowledge, to—

NORA. But it was absolutely necesry that he should not know! My odness, can't you understand that? was necessary he should have no a what a dangerous condition he s in. It was to me that the doctors ne and said that his life was in dan-, and that the only thing to save was to live in the south. Do you ppose I didn't try, first of all, to get at I wanted as if it were for myf? I told him how much I should e to travel abroad like other young ves; I tried tears and entreaties h him; I told him that he ought to nember the condition I was in, and t he ought to be kind and indulgent me; I even hinted that he might se a loan. That nearly made him ry, Christine. He said I was ughtless, and that it was his duty my husband not to indulge me in whims and caprices—as I believe called them. Very well, I thought, must be saved—and that was how ame to devise a way out of the iculty—

MRS. L. And did your husband never to know from your father that the ney had not come from him?

NORA. No, never. Papa died just that time. I had meant to let him the secret and beg him never to eal it. But he was so ill then—, there never was any need to tell .

MRS. L. And since then have you er told your secret to your husband?

NORA. Good Heavens, no! How could you think so? A man who has such strong opinions about these things! And besides, how painful and humiliating it would be for Torvald, with his manly indepedence, to know that he owed me anything! It would upset our mutual relations altogether; our beautiful happy home would no longer be what it is now.

MRS. L. Do you mean never to tell him about it?

NORA [*meditatively, and with a half smile*]. Yes—some day, perhaps, after many years, when I am no longer as nice-looking as I am now. Don't laugh at me! I mean, of course, when Torvald is no longer as devoted to me as he is now; when my dancing and dressing-up and reciting have palled on him; then it may be a good thing to have something in reserve— [*Breaking off.*] What nonsense! That time will never come. Now, what do you think of my great secret, Christine? Do you still think I am of no use? I can tell you, too, that this affair has caused me a lot of worry. It has been by no means easy for me to meet my engagements punctually. I may tell you that there is something that is called in business, quarterly interest, and another thing called payment in instalments, and it is always so dreadfully difficult to manage them. I have had to save a little here and there, where I could, you understand. I have not been able to put aside much from my housekeeping money, for Torvald must have a good table. I couldn't let my children be shabbily dressed; I have felt obliged to use up all he gave me for them, the sweet little darlings!

MRS. L. So it has all had to come out of your own necessaries of life, poor Nora?

NORA. Of course. Besides, I was the one responsible for it. Whenever Torvald has given me money for new dresses and such things, I have never spent more than half of it; I have always bought the simplest and cheapest things. Thank Heaven, any clothes look well on me, and so Torvald has never noticed it. But it was often very hard on me, Christine—because it is delightful to be really well dressed, isn't it?

MRS. L. Quite so.

NORA. Well, then I have found other ways of earning money. Last winter I was lucky enough to get a lot of copying to do; so I locked myself up and sat writing every evening until quite late at night. Many a time I was desperately tired; but all the same it was a tremendous pleasure to sit there working and earning money. It was like being a man.

MRS. L. How much have you been able to pay off in that way?

NORA. I can't tell you exactly. You see, it is very difficult to keep an account of a business matter of that kind. I only know that I have paid every penny that I could scrape together. Many a time I was at my wits' end. [*Smiles.*] Then I used to sit here and imagine that a rich old gentleman had fallen in love with me—

MRS. L. What! Who was it?

NORA. Be quiet!—that he had died; and that when his will was opened it contained, written in big letters, the instruction: "The lovely Mrs. Nora Helmer is to have all I possess paid over to her at once in cash."

MRS. L. But, my dear Nora—wh could the man be?

NORA. Good gracious, can't yo understand? There was no old gentl man at all; it was only something tha I used to sit here and imagine, when couldn't think of any way of procurin money. But it's all the same now the tiresome old person can stay whe he is, as far as I am concerned; don't care about him or his will eithe for I am free from care now. [*Jump up.*] My goodness, it's delightful t think of, Christine! Free from care To be able to be free from care, quit free from care; to be able to play an romp with the children; to be able t keep the house beautifully and hav everything just as Torvald likes i And, think of it, soon the spring wi come and the big blue sky! Perhap we shall be able to take a little trip- perhaps I shall see the sea again! O it's a wonderful thing to be alive an be happy. [*A bell is heard in the hall*

MRS. L. [*rising*]. There is the bel perhaps I had better go.

NORA. No, don't go; no one wi come in here; it is sure to be f Torvald.

SERVANT [*at the hall door*]. Excu me, ma'am—there is a gentleman to s the master, and as the doctor is wi him—

NORA. Who is it?

KROG. [*at the door*]. It is I, Mr Helmer. [MRS. LINDE *starts, trembl and turns to the window.*]

NORA [*takes a step towards him, an speaks in a strained, low voice*]. You What is it? What do you want to s my husband about?

KROG. Bank business—in a way. have a small post in the Bank, and

ar your husband is to be our chief
w.

NORA. Then it is—

KROG. Nothing but dry business
atters, Mrs. Helmer; absolutely no-
ing else.

NORA. Be so good as to go into the
udy, then. [*She bows indifferently
him and shuts the door into the
ll; then comes back and makes up the
e in the stove.*]

MRS. L. Nora— who was that man?

NORA. A lawyer, of the name of
rogstad.

MRS. L. Then it really was he.

NORA. Do you know the man?

MRS. L. I used to—many years ago.
one time he was a solicitor's clerk
our town.

NORA. Yes, he was.

MRS. L. He is greatly altered.

NORA. He made a very unhappy
rriage.

MRS. L. He is a widower now, isn't
?

NORA. With several children. There
w, it is burning up. [*Shuts the
or of the stove and moves the rock-
-chair aside.*]

MRS. L. They say he carries on
ious kinds of business.

NORA. Really! Perhaps he does; I
n't know anything about it. But
n't let us think of business; it is so
esome.

DOCTOR RANK [*comes out of* HEL-
E'S *study. Before he shuts the door
calls to him*]. No, my dear fellow,
von't disturb you; I would rather
into your wife for a little while.
uts the door and sees* MRS. LINDE.]
eg your pardon; I am afraid I am
urbing you too.

NORA. No, not at all. [*Introducing
him.*] Doctor Rank, Mrs. Linde.

RANK. I have often heard Mrs. Linde's name mentioned here. I think I passed you on the stairs when I arrived, Mrs. Linde?

MRS. L. Yes, I go up very slowly; I can't manage stairs well.

RANK. Ah! some slight internal weakness?

MRS. L. No, the fact is I have been overworking myself.

RANK. Nothing more than that? Then I suppose you have come to town to amuse yourself with our entertainments?

MRS. L. I have come to look for work.

RANK. Is that a good cure for overwork.

MRS. L. One must live, Doctor Rank.

RANK. Yes, the general opinion seems to be that it is necessary.

NORA. Look here, Doctor Rank— you know you want to live.

RANK. Certainly. However wretched I may feel, I want to prolong the agony as long as possible. All my patients are like that. And so are those who are morally diseased; one of them, and a bad case too, is at this very moment with Helmer—

MRS. L. [*sadly*]. Ah!

NORA. Whom do you mean?

RANK. A lawyer of the name of Krogstad, a fellow you don't know at all. He suffers from a diseased moral character, Mrs. Helmer; but even he began talking of its being highly important that he should live.

NORA. Did he? What did he want to speak to Torvald about?

RANK. I have no idea; I only heard that it was something about the Bank.

NORA. I didn't know this—what's his

name—Krogstad had anything to do with the Bank.

RANK. Yes, he has some sort of appointment there. [*To* MRS. LINDE.] I don't know whether you find also in your part of the world that there are certain people who go zealously snuffing about to smell out moral corruption, and, as soon as they have found some, put the person concerned into some lucrative position where they can keep their eye on him. Healthy natures are left out in the cold.

MRS. L. Still I think the sick are those who most need taking care of.

RANK [*shrugging his shoulders*]. Yes, there you are. That is the sentiment that is turning Society into a sick-house.

[NORA, *who has been absorbed in her thoughts, breaks out into smothered laughter and claps her hands.*]

RANK. Why do you laugh at that? Have you any notion what Society really is?

NORA. What do I care about tiresome Society? I am laughing at something quite different, something extremely amusing. Tell me, Doctor Rank, are all the people who are employed in the Bank dependent on Torvald now?

RANK. Is that what you find so extremely amusing?

NORA [*smiling and humming*]. That's my affair! [*Walking about the room.*] It's perfectly glorious to think that we have—that Torvald has so much power over so many people. [*Takes the packet from her pocket.*] Doctor Rank what do you say to a macaroon?

RANK. What, macaroons? I thought they were forbidden here.

NORA. Yes, but these are some Christine gave me.

MRS. L. What! I?—

NORA. Oh, well, don't be alarmed You couldn't know that Torvald ha forbidden them. I must tell you tha he is afraid they will spoil my teeth But, bah!—once in a way— That's s isn't it, Doctor Rank? By your leave [*Puts a macaroon into his mouth.*] Yo must have one too, Christine. And shall have one, just a little one—or a most two. [*Walking about.*] I am tre mendously happy. There is just on thing in the world now that I shoul dearly love to do.

RANK. Well, what is that?

NORA. It's something I should dearl love to say, if Torvald could hear m

RANK. Well, why can't you say it

NORA. No, I daren't; it's so shock ing.

MRS. L. Shocking?

RANK. Well, I should not advis you to say it. Still, with us you migh What is it you would so much like t say if Torvald could hear you?

NORA. I should just love to say— Well, I'm damned!

RANK. Are you mad?

MRS. L. Nora, dear—!

RANK. Say it, here he is!

NORA [*hiding the packet*]. Hush Hush! Hush! [HELMER *comes out o his room, with his coat over his arm and his hat in his hand.*]

NORA. Well, Torvald dear, have yo got rid of him?

HEL. Yes, he has just gone.

NORA. Let me introduce you—th is Christine, who has come to town.

HEL. Christine—? Excuse me, b I don't know—

NORA. Mrs. Linde, dear; Christi Linde.

HEL. Of course. A school friend my wife's, I presume?

MRS. L. Yes, we have known each ıer since then.

NORA. And just think, she has taken ong journey in order to see you.

HEL. What do you mean?

MRS. L. No, really, I—

NORA. Christine is tremendously ver at book-keeping, and she is ghtfully anxious to work under some ver man, so as to perfect herself—

HEL. Very sensible, Mrs. Linde.

NORA. And when she heard you had en appointed manager of the Bank— news was telegraphed, you know— travelled here as quick as she could, rvald, I am sure you will be able do something for Christine, for my ke, won't you?

HEL. Well, it is not altogether im- ssible. I presume you are a widow, s. Linde?

MRS. L. Yes.

HEL. And have had some experience bookkeeping?

MRS. L. Yes, a fair amount.

HEL. Ah! well, it's very likely I y be able to find something for ı—

NORA [*clapping her hands*]. What I tell you?

HEL. You have just come at a for- ıate moment, Mrs. Linde.

MRS. L. How am I to thank you?

HEL. There is no need. [*Puts on coat.*] But to-day you must excuse —

RANK. Wait a minute; I will come h you. [*Brings his fur coat from hall and warms it at the fire.*]

NORA. Don't be long away, Torvald r.

HEL. About an hour, not more.

NORA. Are you going too, Christine?

MRS L. [*putting on her cloak*]. Yes, I must go and look for a room.

HEL. Oh, well then, we can walk down the street together.

NORA [*helping her*]. What a pity it is we are so short of space here; I am afraid it is impossible for us—

MRS. L. Please don't think of it! Good-bye, Nora dear, and many thanks.

NORA. Good-bye for the present. Of course you will come back this evening. And you too, Dr. Rank. What do you say? If you are well enough? Oh, you must be! Wrap yourself up well. [*They go to the door all talking together. Children's voices are heard on the staircase.*]

NORA. There they are. There they are! [*She runs to open the door. The* NURSE *comes in with the children.*] Come in! Come in! [*Stoops and kisses them.*] Oh, you sweet blessings! Look at them, Christine! Aren't they darlings?

RANK. Don't let us stand here in the draught.

HEL. Come along, Mrs. Linde; the place will only be bearable for a mother now!

[RANK, HELMER, *and* MRS. LINDE *go downstairs. The* NURSE *comes forward with the children;* NORA *shuts the hall door.*]

NORA. How fresh and well you look! Such red cheeks!—like apples and roses. [*The children all talk at once while she speaks to them.*] Have you had great fun? That's splendid! What, you pulled both Emmy and Bob along on the sledge? both at once? that *was* good. You are a clever boy, Ivar. Let me take her for a little, Anne. My sweet little baby doll! [*Takes the baby*

from the MAID *and dances it up and down.*] Yes, yes, mother will dance with Bob too. What! Have you been snowballing? I wish I had been there too! No, no, I will take their things off, Anne; please let me do it, it is such fun. Go in now, you look half frozen. There is some hot coffee for you on the stove.

[*The* NURSE *goes into the room on the left.* NORA *takes off the children's things and throws them about, while they all talk to her at once.*]

NORA. *Really!* Did a big dog run after you? But it didn't bite you? No, dogs don't bite nice little dolly children. You mustn't look at the parcels, Ivar. What are they? Ah, I daresay you would like to know. No, no—it's something nasty! Come, let us have a game! What shall we play at? Hide and Seek? Yes, we'll play Hide and Seek. Bob shall hide first. Must I hide? Very well, I'll hide first. [*She and the children laugh and shout, and romp in and out of the room; at last* NORA *hides under the table, the children rush in and look for her, but do not see her; they hear her smothered laughter, run to the table, lift up the cloth and find her. Shouts of laughter. She crawls forward and pretends to frighten them. Fresh laughter. Meanwhile there has been a knock at the hall door, but none of them has noticed it. The door is half opened, and* KROGSTAD *appears. He waits a little; the game goes on.*]

KROG. Excuse me, Mrs. Helmer.

NORA [*with a stifled cry, turns round and gets up onto her knees*]. Ah! what do you want?

KROG. Excuse me, the outer door was ajar; I suppose someone forgot to shut it.

NORA [*rising*]. My husband is ou Mr. Krogstad.

KROG. I know that.

NORA. What do you want here, then

KROG. A word with you.

NORA. With me?— [*To the childre gently.*] Go in to nurse. What? N the strange man won't do mother an harm. When he has gone we will hav another game. [*She takes the childre into the room on the left, and shu the door after them.*] You want t speak to me?

KROG. Yes, I do.

NORA. To-day? It is not the firs of the month yet.

KROG. No, it is Christmas Eve, an it will depend on yourself what sort o a Christmas you will spend.

NORA. What do you want? To-da it is absolutely impossible for me—

KROG. We won't talk about that ti later on. This is something differen I presume you can give me a moment

NORA. Yes—yes, I can—although-

KROG. Good. I was in Olsen's Res aurant and saw your husband goin down the street—

NORA. Yes?

KROG. With a lady.

NORA. What then?

KROG. May I make so bold as t ask if it was a Mrs. Linde?

NORA. It was.

KROG. Just arrived in town?

NORA. Yes, to-day?

KROG. She is a great friend of your isn't she?

NORA. She is. But I don't see—

KROG. I knew her too, once upon time.

NORA. I am aware of that.

KROG. Are you? So you know a about it; I thought as much. Then

n ask you, without beating about the ush—is Mrs. Linde to have an appointment in the Bank?

NORA. What right have you to question me, Mr. Krogstad?—You, one of y husband's subordinates! But since u ask, you shall know. Yes, Mrs. nde *is* to have an appointment. And was I who pleaded her cause, Mr. rogstad, let me tell you that.

KROG. I was right in what I thought, en.

NORA [*walking up and down the age*]. Sometimes one has a tiny little of influence, I should hope. Because e is a woman, it does not necessarily llow that—. When anyone is in a bordinate position, Mr. Krogstad, ey should really be careful to avoid fending anyone who—who—

KROG. Who has influence?

NORA. Exactly.

KROG. [*changing his tone*]. Mrs. Helr, you will be so good as to use your fluence on my behalf.

NORA. What? What do you mean?

KROG. You will be so kind as to see at I am allowed to keep my subornate position in the Bank.

NORA. What do you mean by that? ho proposes to take your post away om you?

KROG. Oh, there is no necessity to ep up the pretence of ignorance. I n quite understand that your friend not very anxious to expose herself the chance of rubbing shoulders h me; and I quite understand, too, om I have to thank for being turned

NORA. But I assure you—

KROG. Very likely; but, to come to point, the time has come when I uld advise you to use your influence to prevent that.

NORA. But, Mr. Krogstad, I *have* no influence.

KROG. Haven't you? I thought you said yourself just now—

NORA. Naturally I did not mean you to put that construction on it. I! What should make you think I have any influence of that kind with my husband?

KROG. Oh, I have known your husband from our student days. I don't suppose he is any more unassailable than other husbands.

NORA. If you speak slightingly of my husband, I shall turn you out of the house.

KROG. You are bold, Mrs. Helmer.

NORA. I am not afraid of you any longer. As soon as the New Year comes, I shall in a very short time be free of the whole thing.

KROG. [*controlling himself*]. Listen to me, Mrs. Helmer. If necessary, I am prepared to fight for my small post in the Bank as if I were fighting for my life.

NORA. So it seems.

KROG. It is not only for the sake of the money; indeed, that weighs least with me in the matter. There is another reason—well, I may as well tell you. My position is this. I daresay you know, like everybody else, that once, many years ago, I was guilty of an indiscretion.

NORA. I think I have heard something of the kind.

KROG. The matter never came into court; but every way seemed to be closed to me after that. So I took to the business that you know of. I had to do something; and, honestly, I don't think I've been one of the worst. But now I must cut myself free from all

that. My sons are growing up; for their sake I must try and win back as much respect as I can in the town. This post in the Bank was like the first step up for me—and now your husband is going to kick me downstairs again into the mud.

NORA. But you must believe me, Mr. Krogstad; it is not in my power to help you at all.

KROG. Then it is because you haven't the will; but I have means to compel you.

NORA. You don't mean that you will tell my husband that I owe you money?

KROG. Hm!—suppose I were to tell him?

NORA. It would be perfectly infamous of you. [*Sobbing.*] To think of his learning my secret, which has been my joy and pride, in such an ugly, clumsy way—that he should learn it from you! And it would put me in a horribly disagreeable position—

KROG. Only disagreeable?

NORA [*impetuously*]. Well, do it then!—and it will be the worse for you. My husband will see for himself what a blackguard you are, and you certainly won't keep your post then.

KROG. I asked you if it was only a disagreeable scene at home that you were afraid of?

NORA. If my husband does get to know of it, of course he will at once pay you what is still owing, and we shall have nothing more to do with you.

KROG. [*coming a step nearer.*] Listen to me, Mrs. Helmer. Either you have a very bad memory or you know very little of business. I shall be obliged to remind you of a few details.

NORA. What do you mean?

KROG. When your husband was ill, you came to me to borrow two hundred and fifty pounds.

NORA. I didn't know any one else to go to.

KROG. I promisd to get you that amount—

NORA. Yes, and you did so.

KROG. I promised to get you that amount, on certain conditions. Your mind was so taken up with your husband's illness, and you were so anxious to get the money for your journey that you seem to have paid no attention to the conditions of our bargain. Therefore it will not be amiss if I remind you of them. Now, I promised to get the money on the security of a bond which I drew up.

NORA. Yes, and which I signed.

KROG. Good. But below your signature there were a few lines constituting your father a surety for the money; those lines your father should have signed.

NORA. Should? He did sign them.

KROG. I had left the date blank—that is to say your father should himself have inserted the date on which he signed the paper. Do you remember that?

NORA. Yes, I think I remember—

KROG. Then I gave you the bond to send by post to your father. Is that not so?

NORA. Yes.

KROG. And you naturally did so at once, because five or six days afterwards you brought me the bond with your father's signature. And then I gave you the money.

NORA. Well, haven't I been paying it off regularly?

KROG. Fairly so, yes. But—to come back to the matter in hand—that must

ve been a very trying time for you, rs. Helmer?

NORA. It was, indeed.

KROG. Your father was very ill, isn't he?

NORA. He was very near his end.

KROG. And died soon afterwards?

NORA. Yes.

KROG. Tell me, Mrs. Helmer, can u by any chance remember what day ur father died?—on what day of the nth, I mean.

NORA. Papa died on the 29th of ptember.

KROG. That is correct; I have as-rtained it for myself. And, as that so, there is a discrepancy [*taking a per from his pocket*] which I cannot count for.

NORA. What discrepancy? I don't ow—

KROG. The discrepancy consists, rs. Helmer, in the fact that your ther signed this bond three days er his death.

NORA. What do you mean? I don't derstand—

KROG. Your father died on the 29th September. But, look here; your ther has dated his signature the 2nd October. It is a discrepancy, isn't [NORA *is silent.*] Can you explain to me? [NORA *is still silent.*] It is remarkable thing, too, that the words nd of October," as well as the year, e not written in your father's hand-iting but in one that I think I know. ell, of course it can be explained; ur father may have forgotten to date signature, and someone else may ve dated it haphazard before they ew of his death. There is no harm that. It all depends on the signa-re of the name; and *that* is genuine, I suppose, Mrs. Helmer? It was your father himself who signed his name here?

NORA [*after a short pause, throws her head up and looks defiantly at him*]. No, it was not. It was I that wrote papa's name.

KROG. Are you aware that is a dangerous confession?

NORA. In what way? You shall have your money soon.

KROG. Let me ask you a question; why did you not send the paper to your father?

NORA. It was impossible; papa was so ill. If I had asked him for his signature, I should have had to tell him what the money was to be used for; and when he was so ill himself I couldn't tell him that my husband's life was in danger—it was impossible.

KROG. It would have been better for you if you had given up your trip abroad.

NORA. No, that was impossible. That trip was to save my husband's life; I couldn't give that up.

KROG. But did it never occur to you that you were committing a fraud on me?

NORA. I couldn't take that into account; I didn't trouble myself about you at all. I couldn't bear you, because you put so many heartless difficulties in my way, although you knew what a dangerous condition my husband was in.

KROG. Mrs. Helmer, you evidently do not realise clearly what it is that you have been guilty of. But I can assure you that my one false step, which lost me all my reputation, was nothing more or nothing worse than what you have done.

NORA. You? Do you ask me to believe that you were brave enough to run a risk to save your wife's life.

KROG. The law cares nothing about motives.

NORA. Then it must be a very foolish law.

KROG. Foolish or not, it is the law by which you will be judged, if I produce this paper in court.

NORA. I don't believe it. Is a daughter not to be allowed to spare her dying father anxiety and care? Is a wife not to be allowed to save her husband's life? I don't know much about law; but I am certain that there must be laws permitting such things as that. Have you no knowledge of such laws —you who are a lawyer? You must be a very poor lawyer, Mr. Krogstad.

KROG. Maybe. But matters of business—such business as you and I have had together—do you think I don't understand that? Very well. Do as you please. But let me tell you this—if I lose my position a second time, you shall lose yours with me. [*He bows and goes out through the hall*].

NORA [*appears buried in thought for a short time, then tosses her head*]. Nonsense! Trying to frighten me like that!—I am not so silly as he thinks. [*Begins to busy herself putting the children's things in order.*] And yet—? No, it's impossible! I did it for love's sake.

THE CHILDREN [*in the doorway on the left*]. Mother, the stranger man has gone out through the gate.

NORA. Yes, dears, I know. But, don't tell anyone about the stranger man. Do you hear? Not even papa.

CHILDREN. No, mother; but will you come and play again?

NORA. No, no,—not now.

CHILDREN. But, mother, you promised us.

NORA. Yes, but I can't now. Run away in; I have such a lot to do. Run away in, my sweet little darlings. [*She gets them into the room by degrees and shuts the door on them; then sits down on the sofa, takes up a piece of needlework and sews a few stitches, but soon stops.*] No! [*Throws down the work, gets up, goes to the hall door and calls out.*] Helen! bring the Tree in. [*Goes to the table on the left, opens a drawer, and stops again.*] No, no, it is quite impossible!

MAID [*coming in with the Tree.*] Where shall I put it, ma'am?

NORA. Here, in the middle of the floor.

MAID. Shall I get you anything else?

NORA. No, thank you. I have all I want.

[*Exit* MAID.

NORA [*begins dressing the tree*]. A candle here—and flowers here—The horrible man! It's all nonsense —there's nothing wrong. The Tree shall be splendid! I will do everything I can think of to please you, Torvald!—I will sing for you, dance for you—[HELMER *comes in with some papers under his arm.*] Oh, are you back already?

HEL. Yes. Has anyone been here?

NORA. Here? No.

HEL. Thaat is strange. I saw Krogstad going out of the gate.

NORA. Did you? Oh yes, I forgot, Krogstad was here for a moment.

HEL. Nora, I can see from your manner that he has been here beg

ng you to say a good word for him.

NORA. Yes.

HEL. And you were to appear to it of your own accord; you were to nceal from me the fact of his hav- g been here; didn't he beg that of u too?

NORA. Yes, Torvald, but—

HEL. Nora, Nora, and you would a party to that sort of thing? To ve any talk with a man like that, d give him any sort of promise? nd to tell me a lie into the bargain?

NORA. A lie—?

HEL. Didn't you tell me no one d been here? [*Shakes his finger at r.*] My little song-bird must never that again. A song-bird must ve a clean beak to chirp with—no lse notes! [*Puts his arm around r waist.*] That is so, isn't it? Yes, am sure it is. [*Let's her go.*] We ll say no more about it. [*Sits wn by the stove.*] How warm and ug it is here! [*Turns over his pers.*]

NORA [*after a short pause, during ich she busies herself with the ristmas Tree*]. Torvald!

HEL. Yes.

NORA. I am looking forward tre- ndously to the fancy dress ball at Stenborg's the day after to-mor- v.

HEL. And I am tremendously cu- us to see what you are going to rprise me with.

NORA. It was very silly of me to nt to do that.

HEL. What do you mean?

NORA. I can't hit upon anything t will do; everything I think of ms so silly and insignificant.

HEL. Does my little Nora ack- nowledge that at last?

NORA [*standing behind his chair with her arms on the back of it*]. Are you very busy, Torvald?

HEL. Well—

NORA. What are all those papers?

HEL. Bank business.

NORA. Already?

HEL. I have got authority from the retiring manager to undertake the necessary changes in the staff and in the rearrangement of the work; and I must make use of the Christmas week for that, so as to have every- thing in order for the new year.

NORA. Then that was why this poor Krogstad—

HEL. Hm!

NORA [*leans against the back of his chair and strokes his hair.*] If you hadn't been so busy I should have asked you a tremendously big favour, Torvald.

HEL. What is that? Tell me.

NORA. There is no one has such good taste as you. And I do so want to look nice at the fancy-dress ball. Tor- vald, couldn't you take me in hand and decide what I shall go as, and what sort of a dress I shall wear?

HEL. Aha! so my obstinate little woman is obliged to get someone to come to her rescue?

NORA. Yes, Torvald, I can't get along a bit without your help.

HEL. Very well, I will think it over, we shall manage to hit upon something.

NORA. That is nice of you. [*Goes to the Christmas Tree. A short pause.*] How pretty the red flowers look—. But, tell me, was it really something very bad that this Krogstad was guilty of?

HEL. He forged someone's name.

Have you any idea what that means?

NORA. Isn't it possible that he was driven to do it by necessity?

HEL. Yes; or, as in so many cases, by imprudence. I am not so heartless as to condemn a man altogether because of a single false step of that kind.

NORA. No you wouldn't, would you, Torvald?

HEL. Many a man has been able to retrieve his character, if he has openly confessed his fault and taken his punishment.

NORA. Punishment—?

HEL. But Krogstad did nothing of that sort; he got himself out of it by a cunning trick, and that is why he has gone under altogether.

NORA. But do you think it would —?

HEL. Just think how a guilty man like that has to lie and play the hypocrite with everyone, how he has to wear a mask in the presence of those near and dear to him, even before his own wife and children. And about the children—that is the most terrible part of it all, Nora.

NORA. How?

HEL. Because such an atmosphere of lies infects and poisons the whole life of a home. Each breath the children take in such a house is full of the germs of evil.

NORA [*coming nearer him*]. Are you sure of that?

HEL. My dear, I have often seen it in the course of my life as a lawyer. Almost everyone who has gone to the bad early in life has had a deceitful mother.

NORA. Why do you only say—mother?

HEL. It seems most commonly to be the mother's influence, though naturally a bad father's would have the same result. Every lawyer is familiar with the fact. This Krogstad, now, has been persistently poisoning his own children with lies and dissimulation; that is why I say he has lost all moral character. [*Holds out his hands to her.*] That is why my sweet little Nora must promise me not to plead his cause. Give me your hand on it. Come, come, what is this? Give me your hand. There now, that's settled. I assure you it would be quite impossible for me to work with him; I literally feel physically ill when I am in the company of such people.

NORA [*takes her hand out of his and goes to the opposite side of the Christmas Tree*]. How hot it is in here; and I have such a lot to do.

HEL. [*getting up and putting his papers in order*]. Yes, and I must try and read through some of these before dinner; and I must think about your costume, too. And it is just possible I may have something ready in gold paper to hang up on the Tree. [*Puts his hand on her head.*] My precious little singing-bird! [*He goes in to his room and shuts the door after him.*]

NORA [*after a pause, whispers.*] No, no—it isn't true. It's impossible; it must be impossible.

[*The* NURSE *opens the door on the left.*]

NURSE. The little ones are begging so hard to be allowed to come in to mamma.

NORA. No, no, no! Don't let them come in to me! You stay with them, Anne.

NURSE. Very well, ma'am. [*Shuts*

e door.]

NORA [*pale with terror*]. Deprave
y little children? Poison my home?
l *short pause. Then she tosses her*
ad.] It's not true. It can't possibly
true.

ACT II

THE SAME SCENE.—*The Christmas*
ee is in the corner by the piano,
ipped of its ornaments and with
rnt-down candle-ends on its dishev-
ed branches. NORA'S *cloak and hat*
e lying on the sofa. She is alone in
e room, walking about uneasily. She
ps by the sofa and takes up her
ak.

NORA [*drops the cloak*]. Someone
coming now! [*Goes to the door and*
tens.] No—it is no one. Of course,
one will come to-day, Christmas
y—nor to-morrow either. But, per-
ps—[*opens the door and looks out*].
, nothing in the letter-box; it is
te empty. [*Comes forward.*] What
bish! of course he can't be in earn-
about it. Such a thing couldn't
pen; it is impossible—I have three
le children.

[*Enter the* NURSE *from the room on*
left, carrying a big cardboard box.]

NURSE. At last I have found the box
h the fancy dress.

NORA. Thanks; put it on the table.

NURSE [*in doing so*]. But it is very
ch in want of mending.

NORA. I should like to tear it into
undred thousand pieces.

NURSE. What an idea! It can easily
put in order—just a little patience.

NORA. Yes, I will go and get Mrs.
de to come and help me with it.

NURSE. What, out again? In this
rible weather? You will catch cold,
am, and make yourself ill.

NORA. Well, worse than that might happen. How are the children?

NURSE. The poor little souls are playing with their Christmas presents, but—

NORA. Do they ask much for me?

NURSE. You see, they are so accustomed to have their mamma with them.

NORA. Yes, but nurse, I shall not be able to be so much with them now as I was before.

NURSE. Oh, well, young children easily get accustomed to anything.

NORA. Do you think so? Do you think they would forget their mother if she went away altogether?

NURSE. Good heavens!—went away altogether?

NORA. Nurse, I want you to tell me something I have often wondered about —how could you have the heart to put your own child out among strangers?

NURSE. I was obliged to, if I wanted to be little Nora's nurse.

NORA. Yes, but how could you be willing to do it?

NURSE. What, when I was going to get such a good place by it? A poor girl who has got into trouble should be glad to. Besides, that wicked man didn't do a single thing for me.

NORA. But I suppose your daughter has quite forgotten you.

NURSE. No, indeed she hasn't. She wrote to me when she was confirmed, and when she was married.

NORA [*putting her arms round her neck*]. Dear old Anne, you were a good mother to me when I was little.

NURSE. Little Nora, poor dear, had no other mother but me.

NORA. And if my little ones had no other mother, I am sure you would— What nonsense I am talking! [*Opens*

the box.] Go in to them. Now I must—. You will see to-morrow how charming I shall look.

NURSE. I am sure there will be no one at the ball so charming as you, ma'am. [*Goes into the room on the left.*]

NORA [*begins to unpack the box, but soon pushes it away from her*]. If only I dared go out. If only no one would come. If only I could be sure nothing would happen here in the meantime. Stuff and nonsense! No one will come. Only I musn't think about it. I will brush my muff. What lovely, lovely gloves! Out of my thoughts, out of my thoughts! One, two, three, four, five, six— [*Screams.*] Ah! there is someone coming—. [*Makes a movement towards the door, but stands irresolute.*]

[*Enter* MRS. LINDE *from the hall, where she has taken off her cloak and hat.*]

NORA. Oh, it's you, Christine. There is no one else out there, is there? How good of you to come!

MRS. L. I heard you were up asking for me.

NORA. Yes, I was passing by. As a matter of fact, it is something you could help me with. Let us sit down here on the sofa. Look here. To-morrow evening there is to be a fancy-dress ball at the Stenborgs', who live above us; and Torvald wants me to go as a Neapolitan fisher-girl, and dance the Tarantella that I learnt at Capri.

MRS. L. I see; you are going to keep up the character.

NORA. Yes, Torvald wants me to. Look, here is the dress; Torvald had it made for me there, but now it is all so torn, and I haven't any idea—

MRS. L. We will easily put that right. It is only some of the trimming come unsewn here and there. Needle and thread? Now then, that's all we want.

MRS. L. [*sewing*]. So you are going to be dressed up to-morrow, Nora. I will tell you what—I shall come in for a moment and see you in your fine feathers. But I have completely forgotten to thank you for a delightful evening yesterday.

NORA [*gets up, and crosses the stage*]. Well I don't think yesterday was as pleasant as usual. You ought to have come down to town a little earlier, Christine. Certainly Torvald does understand how to make a house dainty and attractive.

MRS. L. And so do you, it seems to me; you are not your father's daughter for nothing. But tell me, is Doctor Rank always as depressed as he was yesterday?

NORA. No; yesterday it was very noticeable. I must tell you that he suffers from a very dangerous disease. He has consumption of the spine, poor creature. His father was a horrible man who committed all sorts of excesses; and that is why his son was sickly from childhood, do you understand?

MRS. L. [*dropping her sewing*]. But my dearest Nora, how do you know anything about such things?

NORA [*walking about*]. Pooh! When you have three children, you get visits now and then from—from married women, who know something of medical matters, and they talk about one thing and another.

MRS. L. [*goes on sewing. A short s*

ce.] Does Doctor Rank come here
ry day?

NORA. Every day regularly. He is
rvald's most intimate friend, and a
end of mine too. He is just like
e of the family.

MRS. L. But tell me this—is he per-
tly sincere? I mean, isn't he the
d of man that is very anxious to
ke himself agreeable?

NORA. Not in the least. What makes
u think that?

MRS. L. When you introduced him
me yesterday, he declared he had
en heard my name mentioned in this
use; but afterwards I noticed that
ur husband hadn't the slightest idea
o I was. So how could Doctor
nk—?

NORA. That is quite right, Christine.
rvald is so absurdly fond of me
t he wants me absolutely to himself,
he says. At first he used to seem
ost jealous if I mentioned any of
dear folks at home, so naturally I
e up doing so. But I often talk
ut such things with Doctor Rank,
ause he likes hearing about them.

MRS. L. Listen to me, Nora. You
still very like a child in many
ngs, and I am older than you in
ny ways and have a little more ex-
ience. Let me tell you this—you
ht to make an end of it with Doctor
nk.

NORA. What ought I to make an end

MRS. L. Of two things, I think.
terday you talked some nonsense
ut a rich admirer who was to leave
money—

NORA. An admirer who doesn't exist,
ortunately! But what then?

MRS. L. Is Doctor Rank a man of means?

NORA. Yes, he is.

MRS. L. And has no one to provide for?

NORA. No, no one; but—

MRS. L. And comes here every day?

NORA. Yes, I told you so.

MRS. L. But how can this well-bred man be so tactless?

NORA. I don't understand you at all.

MR. L. Don't prevaricate, Nora. Do you suppose I don't guess who lent you the two hundred and fifty pounds?

NORA. Are you out of your senses? How can you think of such a thing! A friend of ours, who comes here every day! Do you realise what a horribly painful position that would be?

MRS. L. Then it really isn't he?

NORA. No, certainly not. It would never have entered into my head for a moment. Besides, he had no money to lend then; he came into his money afterwards.

MRS. L. Well, I think that was lucky for you, my dear Nora.

NORA. No, it would never have come into my head to ask Doctor Rank. Although I am quite sure that if I had asked him—

MRS. L. But of course you won't.

NORA. Of course not. I have no reason to think it could possibly be necessary. But I am quite sure that if I told Doctor Rank—

MRS. L. Behind your husband's back?

NORA. I must make an end of it with the other one, and that will be behind his back too. I *must* make an end of it with him.

MRS. L. Yes, that is what I told you

yesterday, but—

NORA [*walking up and down*]. A man can put a thing like that straight much easier than a woman—

MRS. L. One's husband, yes.

NORA. Nonsense! [*Standing still.*] When you pay off a debt you get your bond back, don't you?

MRS. L. Yes, as a matter of course.

NORA. And can tear it into a hundred thousand pieces, and burn it up—the nasty dirty paper!

MRS. L. [*looks hard at her, lays down her sewing and gets up slowly*]. Nora, you are concealing something from me.

NORA. Do I look as if I were?

MRS. L. Something has happened to you since yesterday morning. Nora, what is it?

NORA [*going nearer to her*]. Christine! [*Listens.*] Hush! there's Torvald come home. Do you mind going in to the children for the present? Torvald can't bear to see dressmaking going on. Let Anne help you.

MRS. L. [*gathering some of the things together*]. Certainly—but I am not going away from here till we have had it out with one another. [*She goes into the room on the left, as Helmer comes in from the hall.*]

NORA [*going up to* HELMER]. I have wanted you so much, Torvald dear.

HEL. Was that the dressmaker?

NORA. No, it was Christine; she is helping me to put my dress in order. You will see I shall look quite smart.

HEL. Wasn't that a happy thought of mine, now?

NORA. Splendid! But don't you think it is nice of me, too, to do as you wish?

HEL. Nice?—because you do as your husband wishes? Well, well, you little rogue, I am sure you did not mean it in that way. But I am not going to disturb you; you will want to be trying on your dress, I expect.

NORA. I suppose you are going to work.

HEL. Yes. [*Shows her a bundle of papers.*] Look at that. I have just been into the bank. [*Turns to go into his room.*]

NORA. Torvald.

HEL. Yes.

NORA. If your little squirrel were to ask you for something very, very prettily—?

HEL. What then?

NORA. Would you do it?

HEL. I should like to hear what it, first.

NORA. Your squirrel would run about and do all her tricks if you would be nice, and do what she wants.

HEL. Speak plainly.

NORA. Your skylark would chirp chirp about in every room, with her song rising and falling—

HEL. Well, my skylark does that anyhow.

NORA. I would play the fairy and dance for you in the moonlight, Torvald.

HEL. Nora—you surely don't mean that request you made of me this morning?

NORA [*going near him*]. Yes, Torvald, I beg you so earnestly—

HEL. Have you really the courage to open up that question again?

NORA. Yes, dear, you *must* do as I ask; you *must* let Krogstad keep his post in the bank.

HEL. My dear Nora, it is his post
t I have arranged Mrs. Linde shall
ve.

NORA. Yes, you have been awfully
d about that; but you could just
well dismiss some other clerk instead
Krogstad.

HEL. This is simply incredible ob-
acy! Because you chose to give him
houghtless promise that you would
ak for him, I am expected to—

NORA. That isn't the reason, Tor-
d. It is for your own sake. This
ow writes in the most scurrilous
vspapers; you have told me so your-
. He can do you an unspeakable
ount of harm. I am frightened to
th of him—

HEL. Ah, I understand; it is recol-
ions of the past that scare you.

NORA. What do you mean?

HEL. Naturally you are thinking of
r father.

NORA. Yes—yes, of course. Just re-
to your mind what these malicious
atures wrote in the papers about
a, and how horribly they slandered
. I believe they would have pro-
ed his dismissal if the Department
not sent you over to inquire into
and if you had not been so kindly
osed and helpful to him.

HEL. My little Nora, there is an im-
tant difference between your father
me. Your father's reputation as
ublic official was not above sus-
on. Mine is, and I hope it will
tinue to be so, as long as I hold
office.

ORA. You never can tell what mis-
f these men may contrive. We
ht to be so well off, so snug and
py here in our peaceful home, and
e no cares—you and I and the chil-
dren, Torvald! That is why I beg you so earnestly—

HEL. And it is just by interceding for him that you make it *impossible* for me to keep him. It is already known at the Bank that I mean to dismiss Krogstad. Is it to get about now that the new manager has changed his mind at his wife's bidding—

NORA. And what if it did?

HEL. Of course!—if only this obstinate little person can get her way! Do you suppose I am going to make myself ridiculous before my whole staff, to let people think I am a man to be swayed by all sorts of outside influence? I should very soon feel the consequences of it I can tell you! And besides, there is one thing that makes it quite impossible for me to have Krogstad in the bank as long as I am manager.

NORA. Whatever is that?

HEL. His moral failings I might perhaps have overlooked, if necessary—

NORA. Yes, you could—couldn't you?

HEL. And I hear he is a good worker, too. But I knew him when we were boys. It was one of those rash friendships that so often prove an incubus in after life. I may as well tell you plainly, we were once on very intimate terms with one another. But this tactless fellow lays no restraint on himself when other people are present. On the contrary, he thinks it gives him the right to adopt a familiar tone with me, and every minute it is "I say, Helmer, old fellow!" and that sort of thing. I assure you it is extremely painful for me. He would make my position in the bank intolerable.

NORA. Torvald, I don't believe you mean that.

HEL. Don't you? Why not?

NORA. Because it is such a narrow-minded way of looking at things.

HEL. What are you saying? Narrow-minded? Do you think I am narrow-minded?

NORA. No, just the opposite, dear—and it is exactly for that reason.

HEL. It's the same thing. You say my point of view is narrow-minded, so I must be so too. Narrow-minded! Very well—I must put an end to this. [*Goes to the hall-door and calls.*] Helen!

NORA. What are you going to do?

HEL. [*looking among his papers*]. Settle it. [*Enter* MAID.] Look here; take this letter and go downstairs with it at once. Find a messenger and tell him to deliver it, and be quick. The address is on it, and here is the money.

MAID. Very well, sir. [*Exit with the letter.*]

HEL. [*putting his papers together*]. Now then, little Miss Obstinate.

NORA [*breathlessly*]. Torvald—what was that letter?

HEL. Krogstad's dismissal.

NORA. Call her back, Torvald! There is still time. Oh, Torvald, call her back! Do it for my sake—for your own sake—for the children's sake! Do you hear me, Torvald? Call her back! You don't know what that letter can bring upon us.

HEL. It's too late.

NORA. Yes, it's too late.

HEL. My dear Nora, I can forgive the anxiety you are in, although really it is an insult to me. It is, indeed. Isn't it an insult to think that I should be afraid of a starving quill-driver's vengeance? But I forgive you nevertheless, because it is such eloquent witness to your great love for me. [*Takes her in his arms.*] And that is as it should be, my own darling Nora. Come what will, you may be sure I shall have both courage and strength if they be needed. You will see I am man enough to take everything upon myself.

NORA [*in a horror-stricken voice*]. What do you mean by that?

HEL. Everything, I say—

NORA [*recovering herself*]. You will never have to do that.

HEL. That's right. Well, we will share it, Nora, as man and wife should. That is how it shall be. [*Caressing her.*] Are you content now? There! there!—not these frightened dove's eyes! The whole thing is only the wildest fancy!—Now, you must go and play through the Tarantella and practise with your tambourine. I shall go into the inner office and shut the door, and I shall hear nothing; you can make as much noise as you please. [*Turns back at the door.*] And when Rank comes, tell him where he will find me. [*Nods to her, takes his papers and goes into his room, and shuts the door after him.*]

NORA [*bewildered with anxiety, stands as if rooted to the spot, and whispers*]. He was capable of doing it. He will do it. He will do it in spite of everything.—No, not that! Never, never! Anything rather than that! Oh, for some help, some way out of it! [*The door-bell rings.*] Doctor Rank! Anything rather than that—anything, whatever it is! [*She puts her hands over her face, pulls herself together, goes to the door and opens it.* RANK *is standing without, hanging up his coat. During the following dialogue it begins to grow dark.*]

NORA. Good-day, Doctor Rank. I ew your ring. But you mustn't go o Torvald now; I think he is busy h something.

RANK. And you?

NORA [*brings him in and shuts the r after him*]. Oh, you know very l I always have time for you.

RANK. Thank you. I shall make use as much of it as I can.

NORA. What do you mean by that? much of it as you can?

RANK. Well, does that alarm you?

NORA. It was such a strange way of ting it. Is anything likely to hap- ?

RANK. Nothing but what I have long n prepared for. But I certainly n't expect it to happen so soon.

NORA [*gripping him by the arm*]. at have you found out? Doctor nk, you must tell me.

RANK [*sitting down by the stove*]. s all up with me. And it can't be ed.

NORA [*with a sigh of relief*]. Is it ut yourself?

RANK. Who else? It is no use lying ne's self. I am the most wretched ll my patients, Mrs. Helmer. Lately ve been taking stock of my internal nomy. Bankrupt! Probably within nonth I shall lie rotting in the rchyard.

NORA. What an ugly thing to say!

RANK. The thing itself is cursedly , and the worst of it is that I l have to face so much more that gly before that. I shall only make more examination of myself; when ve done that, I shall know pretty ainly when it will be that the hor- of dissolution will begin. There mething I want to tell you. Helmer's refined nature gives him an unconquerable disgust at everything that is ugly; I won't have him in my sick-room.

NORA. Oh, but, Doctor Rank—

RANK. I won't have him there. Not on any account. I bar my door to him. As soon as I am quite certain that the worst has come, I shall send you my card with a black cross on it, and then you will know that the loathsome end has begun.

NORA. You are quite absurd to-day. And I wanted you so much to be in a really good humour.

RANK. With death stalking beside me?—To have to pay this penalty for another man's sin! Is there any justice in that? And in every single family, in one way or another, some such inexorable retribution is being exacted—

NORA [*putting her hands over her ears*]. Rubbish! Do talk of something cheerful.

RANK. Oh, it's a mere laughing matter, the whole thing. My poor innocent spine has to suffer for my father's youthful amusements.

NORA [*sitting at the table on the left*]. I suppose you mean that he was too partial to asparagus and pâté de foie gras, don't you?

RANK. Yes, and to truffles.

NORA. Truffles, yes. And oysters too, I suppose?

RANK. Oysters, of course, that goes without saying.

NORA. And heaps of port and champagne. It is sad that all these nice things should take their revenge on our bones.

RANK. Especially that they should revenge themselves on the unlucky

bones of those who have not had the satisfaction of enjoying them.

NORA. Yes, that's the saddest part of it all.

RANK [*with a searching look at her*]. Hm!—

NORA [*after a short pause*]. Why did you smile?

RANK. No, it was you that laughed.

NORA. No, it was you that smiled, Doctor Rank!

RANK [*rising*]. You are a greater rascal than I thought.

NORA. I am in a silly mood to-day.

RANK. So it seems.

NORA [*putting her hands on his shoulders*]. Dear, dear Doctor Rank, death mustn't take you away from Torvald and me.

RANK. It is a loss you would easily recover from. Those who are gone are soon forgotten.

NORA [*looking at him anxiously*]. Do you believe that?

RANK. People form new ties, and then—

NORA. Who will form new ties?

RANK. Both you and Helmer, when I am gone. You yourself are already on the high road to it, I think. What did that Mrs. Linde want here last night?

NORA. Oho!—you don't mean to say that you are jealous of poor Christine?

RANK. Yes, I am. She will be my successor in this house. When I am done for, this woman will—

NORA. Hush! don't speak so loud. She is in that room.

RANK. To-day again. There, you see.

NORA. She has only come to sew my dress for me. Bless my soul, how unreasonable you are! [*Sits down on the sofa.*] Be nice now, Doctor Rank and to-morrow you will see how beautifully I shall dance, and you can imagine I am doing it all for you—and for Torvald too, of course. [*Takes various things out of the box.*] Doctor Rank, come and sit down here, and I will show you something.

RANK [*sitting down*]. What is it?

NORA. Just look at those!

RANK. Silk stockings.

NORA. Flesh-coloured. Aren't they lovely? It is so dark here now, but to-morrow—. No, no, no! you must only look at the feet. Oh, well, you may have leave to look at the legs too.

RANK. Hm!—

NORA. Why are you looking so critical? Don't you think they will fit me?

RANK. I have no means of forming an opinion about that.

NORA [*looks at him for a moment*]. For shame! [*Hits him lightly on the ear with the stockings.*] That's to punish you. [*Folds them up again.*]

RANK. And what other nice things am I to be allowed to see?

NORA. Not a single thing more, for being so naughty. [*She looks among the things, humming to herself.*]

RANK [*after a short silence*]. When I am sitting here, talking to you as intimately as this, I cannot imagine for a moment what would have become of me if I had never come into this house.

NORA [*smiling*]. I believe you do feel thoroughly at home with us.

RANK [*in a lower voice, looking straight in front of him*]. And to be obliged to leave it all—

NORA. Nonsense, you are not going to leave it.

RANK [*as before*]. And not be able leave behind one the slightest token one's gratitude, scarcely even a eting regret—nothing but an empty ace which the first comer can fill as ll as any other.

NORA. And if I asked you now for -? No!

RANK. For what?

NORA. For a big proof of your endship—

RANK. Yes, yes!

NORA. I mean a tremendously big your—

RANK. Would you really make me happy for once?

NORA. Ah, but you don't know what s yet.

RANK. No—but tell me.

NORA. I really can't, Doctor Rank. is something out of all reason; it ans advice, and help, and a favour—

RANK. The bigger a thing it is the ter. I can't conceive what it is you an. Do tell me. Haven't I your fidence?

NORA. More than anyone else. I ow you are my truest and best end, and so I will tell you what it Well, Doctor Rank, it is something must help me to prevent. You w how devotedly, how inexpressibly ply Torvald loves me; he would er for a moment hesitate to give life for me.

ANK [*leaning towards her*]. Nora o you think he is the only one—?

ORA [*with a slight start*]. The one—?

ANK. The only one who would lly give his life for your sake.

ORA [*sadly*]. Is that it?

ANK. I was determined you should w it before I went away, and there will never be a better opportunity than this. Now you know it, Nora. And now you know, too, that you can trust me as you would trust no one else.

NORA [*rises, deliberately and quietly*]. Let me pass.

RANK [*makes room for her to pass him, but sits still*]. Nora!

NORA [*at the hall door.*] Helen, bring in the lamp. [*Goes over to the stove.*] Dear Doctor Rank, that was really horrid of you.

RANK. To have loved you as much as anyone else does? Was that horrid?

NORA. No, but to go and tell me so. There was really no need—

RANK. What do you mean? Did you know—? [MAID *enters with lamp, puts it down on the table, and goes out.*] Nora—Mrs. Helmer—tell me, had you any idea of this?

NORA. Oh, how do I know whether I had or whether I hadn't. I really can't tell you— To think you could be so clumsy, Doctor Rank! We were getting on so nicely.

RANK. Well, at all events you know that you can command me, body and soul. So won't you speak out?

NORA [*looking at him*]. After what happened?

RANK. I beg you to let me know what it is.

NORA. I can't tell you anything now.

RANK. Yes, yes. You musn't punish me in that way. Let me have permission to do for you whatever a man may do.

NORA. You can do nothing for me now. Besides, I really don't need any help at all. You will find that the whole thing is merely fancy on my part. It really is so—of course it is!

[*Sits down in the rocking-chair, and looks at him with a smile.*] You are a nice sort of man, Doctor Rank!—don't you feel ashamed of yourself, now the lamp has come?

RANK. Not a bit. But perhaps I had better go—forever?

NORA. No, indeed, you shall not. Of course you must come here just as before. You know very well Torvald can't do without you.

RANK. Yes, but you?

NORA. Oh, I am always tremendously pleased when you come.

RANK. It is just that, that put me on the wrong track. You are a riddle to me. I have often thought that you would almost as soon be in my company as in Helmer's.

NORA. Yes—you see there are some people one loves best, and others whom one would almost always rather have as companions.

RANK. Yes, there is something in that.

NORA. When I was at home, of course I loved papa best. But I always thought it tremendous fun if I could steal down into the maids' room, because they never moralised at all, and talked to each other about such entertaining things.

RANK. I see—it is *their* place I have taken.

NORA [*jumping up and going to him*]. Oh, dear, nice Doctor Rank, I never meant that at all. But surely you can understand that being with Torvald is a little like being with papa—

[*Enter* MAID *from the hall.*]

MAID. If you please, ma'am. [*Whispers and hands her a card.*]

NORA [*glancing at the card*]. Oh! [*Puts it in her pocket.*]

RANK. Is there anything wrong?

NORA. No, no, not in the least. It is only something—it is my new dress—

RANK. What? Your dress is lying there.

NORA. Oh, yes, that one; but this is another. I ordered it. Torvald musn't know about it—

RANK. Oho! Then that was the great secret.

NORA. Of course. Just go in to him; he is sitting in the inner room. Keep him as long as—

RANK. Make your mind easy; I won't let him escape. [*Goes into* HELMER'S *room.*]

NORA [*to the* MAID]. And he is standing waiting in the kitchen?

MAID. Yes; he came up the back stairs.

NORA. But didn't you tell him no one was in?

MAID. Yes, but it was no good.

NORA. He won't go away?

MAID. No; he says he won't until he has seen you, ma'am.

NORA. Well, let him come in—but quietly. Helen, you mustn't say anything about it to anyone. It is a surprise for my husband.

MAID. Yes, ma'am, I quite understand. [*Exit.*]

NORA. This dreadful thing is going to happen! It will happen in spite of me! No, no, no, it can't happen—it shan't happen! [*She bolts the door of* HELMER'S *room. The* MAID *opens the hall door for* KROGSTAD *and shuts it after him. He is wearing a fur coat, high boots and a fur cap.*]

NORA [*advancing towards him*]. Speak low—my husband is at home.

KROG. No matter about that.

NORA. What do you want of me?

KROG. An explanation of something.

NORA. Make haste then. What is it?

KROG. You know, I suppose, that I ve got my dismissal.

NORA. I couldn't prevent it, Mr. rogstad. I fought as hard as I could your side, but it was no good.

KROG. Does your husband love you little, then? He knows what I can pose you to, and yet he ventures—

NORA. How can you suppose that has any knowledge of the sort?

KROG. I didn't suppose so at all. It uld not be the least like our dear rvald Helmer to show so much cour- e—

NORA. Mr. Krogstad, a little respect my husband, please.

KROG. Certainly—all the respect he serves. But since you have kept the tter so carefully to yourself, I make d to suppose that you have a little arer idea, than you had yesterday, what it actually is that you have ne?

NORA. More than you could ever ch me.

KROG. Yes, such a bad lawyer as m.

NORA. What is it you want of me?

KROG. Only to see how you were, s. Helmer. I have been thinking ut you all day long. A mere cashier, quill-driver, a—well, a man like me ven he has a little of what is called ling, you know.

NORA. Show it, then; think of my le children.

KROG. Have you and your husband ught of mine? But never mind ut that. I only wanted to tell you you need not take this matter too seriously. In the first place there will be no accusation made on my part.

NORA. No, of course not; I was sure of that.

KROG. The whole thing can be arranged amicably; there is no reason why anyone should know anything about it. It will remain a secret between us three.

NORA. My husband must never get to know anything about it.

KROG. How will you be able to prevent it? Am I to understand that you can pay the balance that is owing?

NORA. No, not just at present.

KROG. Or perhaps that you have some expedient for raising the money soon?

NORA. No expedient that I mean to make use of.

KROG. Well, in any case, it would have been of no use to you now. If you stood there with ever so much money in your hand, I would never part with your bond.

NORA. Tell me what purpose you mean to put it to.

KROG. I shall only preserve it—keep it in my possession. No one who is not concerned in the matter shall have the slightest hint of it. So that if the thought of it has driven you to any desperate resolution—

NORA. It has.

KROG. If you had it in your mind to run away from your home—

NORA. I had.

KROG. Or even something worse—

NORA. How could you know that?

KROG. Give up the idea.

NORA. How did you know I had thought of *that?*

KROG. Most of us think of that

at first. I did, too—but I hadn't the courage.

NORA [*faintly*]. No more than I.

KROG [*in a tone of relief*]. No, that's it, isn't it—you hadn't the courage either?

NORA. No, I haven't—I haven't.

KROG. Besides, it would have been a great piece of folly. Once the first storm at home is over— I have a letter for your husband in my pocket.

NORA. Telling him everything?

KROG. In as lenient a manner as I possibly could.

NORA [*quickly*]. He mustn't get the letter. Tear it up. I will find some means of getting money.

KROG. Excuse me, Mrs. Helmer, but I think I told you just now—

NORA. I am not speaking of what I owe you. Tell me what sum you are asking my husband for, and I will get the money.

KROG. I am not asking your husband for a penny.

NORA. What do you want, then?

KROG. I will tell you. I want to rehabilitate myself, Mrs. Helmer; I want to get on; and in that your husband must help me. For the last year and a half I have not had a hand in anything dishonourable, and all that time I have been struggling in most restricted circumstances. I was content to work my way up step by step. Now I am turned out, and I am not going to be satisfied with merely being taken into favour again. I want to get on, I tell you. I want to get into the Bank again, in a higher position. Your husband must make a place for me—

NORA. That he will never do!

KROG. He will; I know him; he dare not protest. And as soon as I am in there again with him, then you will see! Within a year I shall be the manager's right hand. It will be Nils Krogstad and not Torvald Helmer who manages the Bank.

NORA. That's a thing you will never see!

KROG. Do you mean that you will—?

NORA. I have courage enough for it now.

KROG. Oh, you can't frighten me. A fine, spoilt lady like you—

NORA. You will see, you will see.

KROG. Under the ice, perhaps? Down into the cold, coal-black water? And then, in the spring, to float up to the surface, all horrible and unrecognisable, with your hair fallen out—

NORA. You can't frighten me.

KROG. Nor you me. People don't do such things, Mrs. Helmer. Besides, what use would it be? I should have him completely in my power all the same.

NORA. Afterwards? When I am no longer—

KROG. Have you forgotten that it is I who have the keeping of your reputation? [NORA *stands speechlessly looking at him.*] Well, now, I have warned you. Do not do anything foolish. When Helmer has had my letter, I shall expect a message from him. And be sure you remember that it is your husband himself who has forced me into such ways as this again. I will never forgive him for that. Good-bye, Mrs. Helmer. [*Exit through the hall.*]

NORA [*goes to the hall door, opens it slightly and listens*]. He is going. He is not putting the letter in the box. Oh, no, no! that's impossible! [*Opens the door by degrees.*] What is that?

e is standing outside. He is not go- downstairs. Is he hesitating? Can —? [*A letter drops in the box; then* ROGSTAD'S *footsteps are heard, till y die away as he goes downstairs.* RA *utters a stifled cry, and runs ross the room to the table by the a. A short pause.*]

NORA. In the letter-box. [*Steals ross to the hall-door.*] There it lies Torvald, Torvald, there is no hope us now!

MRS. LINDE *comes in from the room the left, carrying the dress.*]

MRS. L. There, I can't see anything re to mend now. Would you like to it on—?

NORA [*in a hoarse whisper*]. Chris-e, come here.

MRS. L. [*throwing the dress down the sofa*]. What is the matter with ? You look so agitated!

NORA. Come here. Do you see that er? There, look—you can see it ough the glass in the letter-box.

MRS. L. Yes, I see it.

NORA. That letter is from Krogstad.

MRS. L. Nora—it was Krogstad who you the money!

NORA. Yes, and now Torvald will w all about it.

MRS. L. Believe me, Nora, that's the thing for both of you.

NORA. You don't know all. I forged me.

MRS. L. Good heavens—!

NORA. I only want to say this to Christine—you must be my wit-.

MRS. L. Your witness? What do mean? What am I to—?

NORA. If I should go out of my d—and it might easily happen—

MRS. L. Nora!

NORA. Or if anything else should happen to me—anything, for instance, that might prevent my being here—

MRS. L. Nora! Nora! you are quite out of your mind.

NORA. And if it should happen that there were someone who wanted to take all the responsibility, all the blame, you understand—

MRS. L. Yes, yes—but how can you suppose—?

NORA. Then you must be my witness, that is not true, Christine. I am not out of my mind at all; I am in my right senses now, and I tell you no one else has known anything about it; I, and I alone, did the whole thing. Remember that.

MRS. L. I will, indeed. But I don't understand all this.

NORA. How should you understand it? A wonderful thing is going to happen?

MRS. L. A wonderful thing?

NORA. Yes, a wonderful thing!—But it is so terrible. Christine; it *mustn't* happen, not for all the world.

MRS. L. I will go at once and see Krogstad.

NORA. Don't go to him; he will do you some harm.

MRS. L. There was a time when he would gladly do anything for my sake.

NORA. He?

MRS. L. Where does he live?

NORA. How should I know—? Yes [*feeling in her pocket*] here is his card. But the letter, the letter—!

HEL. [*calls from his room, knocking at the door*]. Nora!

NORA [*cries out anxiously*]. Oh, what's that? What do you want?

HEL. Don't be so frightened. We are not coming in; you have locked the

door. Are you trying on your dress?

NORA. Yes, that's it. I look so nice, Torvald.

MRS. L. [*who has read the card*]. I see he lives at the corner here.

NORA. Yes, but it's no use. It is hopeless. The letter is lying there in the box.

MRS. L. And your husband keeps the key?

NORA. Yes, always.

MRS. L. Krogstad must ask for his letter back unread, he must find some pretence—

NORA. But it is just at this time that Torvald generally—

MRS. L. You must delay him. Go in to him in the meantime. I will come back as soon as I can. [*She goes out hurriedly through the hall door.*]

NORA [*goes to* HELMER'S *door, opens it and peeps in*]. Torvald!

HEL. [*from the inner room*]. Well? May I venture at last to come into my own room again? Come along, Rank, now you will see— [*Halting in the doorway.*] But what is this?

NORA. What is what, dear?

HEL. Rank led me to expect a splendid transformation.

RANK [*in the doorway*]. I understood so, but evidently I was mistaken.

NORA. Yes, nobody is to have the chance of admiring me in my dress until to-morrow.

HEL. But, my dear Nora, you look so worn out. Have you been practising too much?

NORA. No, I have not practised at all.

HEL. But you will need to—

NORA. Yes, indeed I shall, Torvald. But I can't get on a bit without you to help me; I have absolutely forgotte the whole thing.

HEL. Oh, we will soon work it u again.

NORA. Yes, help me, Torvald. Pr mise that you will! I am so nervou about it—all the people—. You mu give yourself up to me entirely th evening. Not the tiniest bit of bus ness—you mustn't even take a pen your hand. Will you promise, Torva dear?

HEL. I promise. This evening I w be wholly and absolutely at your se vice, you helpless little mortal. A by the way, first of all I will just [*Goes towards the hall door.*]

NORA. What are you going to there?

HEL. Only see if any letters ha come.

NORA. No, no! don't do that, To vald!

HEL. Why not?

NORA. Torvald, please don't. The is nothing there.

HEL. Well, let me look. [*Turns go to the letter-box.* NORA, *at the pia plays the first bars of the Tarantel* HELMER *stops in the doorway.*] Ah

NORA. I can't dance to-morrow if don't practice with you.

HEL. [*going up to her*]. Are y really so afraid of it, dear.

NORA. Yes, so dreadfully afraid it. Let me practice at once; there time now, before we go to dinner. down and play for me, Torvald de criticise me, and correct me as y play.

HEL. With great pleasure, if y wish me to. [*Sits down at the pian*

NORA [*takes out of the box a ta bourine and a long variegated sha*

hastily drapes the shawl round her. n she springs to the front of the e and calls out]. Now play for me! a going to dance!

HELMER *plays and* NORA *dances.* NK *stands by the piano behind* HEL-, *and looks on.*]

EL. [*as he plays*]. Slower, slower!

ORA. I can't do it any other way.

EL. Not so violently, Nora!

ORA. This is the way.

EL. [*stops playing*]. No, no—that ot a bit right.

ORA [*laughing and swinging the bourine*]. Didn't I tell you so?

ANK. Let me play for her.

EL. [*getting up*]. Yes, do. I can ect her better then.

RANK *sits down at the piano and ys.* NORA *dances more and more lly.* HELMER *has taken up a posi- by the stove, and during her dance s her frequent instructions. She not seem to hear him; her hair es down and falls over her shoul- ; she pays no attention to it, but on dancing. Enter* MRS. LINDE.]

RS. L. [*standing as if spell-bound he doorway*]. Oh!—

ORA [*as she dances*]. Such fun, istine!

EL. My dear darling Nora, you are ing as if your life depended on it.

ORA. So it does.

EL. Stop, Rank; this is sheer mad- . Stop, I tell you! [RANK *stops ing, and* NORA *suddenly stands* HELMER *goes up to her.*] I could r have believed it. You have for- en everything I taught you.

ORA [*throwing away the tambou-]*. There, you see.

EL. You will want a lot of coach-

NORA. Yes, you see how much I need it. You must coach me up to the last minute. Promise me that, Torvald!

HEL. You can depend on me.

NORA. You must not think of anything but me, either to-day or to-morrow; you mustn't open a single letter—not even open the letter-box—

HEL. Ah, you are still afraid of that fellow—

NORA. Yes, indeed I am.

HEL. Nora, I can tell from your looks that there is a letter from him lying there.

NORA. I don't know; I think there is; but you must not read anything of that kind now. Nothing horrid must come between us till this is all over.

RANK [*whispers to* HELMER]. You mustn't contradict her.

HEL. [*taking her in his arms*]. The child shall have her way. But to-morrow night, after you have danced—

NORA. Then you will be free. [*The* MAID *appears in the doorway to the right.*]

MAID. Dinner is served, ma'am.

NORA. We will have champagne, Helen.

MAID. Very good, ma'am. [*Exit.*

HEL. Hullo!—are we going to have a banquet?

NORA. Yes, a champagne banquet till the small hours. [*Calls out.*] And a few macaroons, Helen—lots, just for once!

HEL. Come, come, don't be so wild and nervous. Be my own little skylark, as you used.

NORA. Yes, dear, I will. But go in now and you too, Doctor Rank. Christine, you must help me to do up my hair.

RANK [*whispers to* HELMER *as they*

go out]. I suppose there is nothing—she is not expecting anything?

HEL. Far from it, my dear fellow; it is simply nothing more than this childish nervousness I was telling you of. [*They go into the right-hand room.*]

NORA. Well!

MRS. L. Gone out of town.

NORA. I could tell from your face.

MRS. L. He is coming home to-morrow evening. I wrote a note for him.

NORA. You should have let it alone; you must prevent nothing. After all, it is splendid to be waiting for a wonderful thing to happen.

MRS. L. What is it that you are waiting for?

NORA. Oh, you wouldn't understand. Go in to them, I will come in a moment. [MRS. LINDE *goes into the dining-room.* NORA *stands still for a little while, as if to compose herself. Then she looks at her watch.*] Five o'clock. Seven hours till midnight; and then four-and-twenty hours till the next midnight. Then the Tarantella will be over. Twenty-four and seven? Thirty-one hours to live.

HEL. [*from the doorway on the right*]. Where's my little skylark?

NORA [*going to him with her arms outstretched*]. Here she is!

ACT III

THE SAME SCENE.—*The table has been placed in the middle of the stage, with chairs round it. A lamp is burning on the table. The door into the hall stands open. Dance music is heard in the room above.* MRS. LINDE *is sitting at the table idly turning over the leaves of a book; she tries to read, but does not seem able to collect her thoughts. Every now and then she listens intently for a sound at th outer door.*

MRS. L. [*looking at her watch*]. N yet—and the time is nearly up. only he does not—. [*Listens again* Ah, there he is. [*Goes into the ha and opens the outer door carefull Light footsteps are heard on the stai She whispers.*] Come in. There is n one here.

KROG. [*in the doorway*]. I found note from you at home. What does th mean?

MRS. L. It is absolutely necessa that I should have a talk with you.

KROG. Really? And it is absolute necessary that it should be here?

MRS. L. It is impossible where I liv there is no private entrance to m rooms. Come in; we are quite alon The maid is asleep, and the Helme are at the dance upstairs.

KROG. [*coming into the room*]. A the Helmers really at a dance t night?

MRS. L. Yes, why not?

KROG. Certainly—why not?

MRS. L. Now, Nils, let us have talk.

KROG. Can we two have anything talk about.

MRS. L. We have a great deal talk about.

KROG. I shouldn't have thought

MRS. L. No, you have never prope understood me.

KROG. Was there anything else understand except what was obvious all the world—a heartless woman ji a man when a more lucrative char turns up.

MRS. L. Do you believe I am absolutely heartless as all that? A

you believe it with a light heart?

KROG. Didn't you?

MRS. L. Nils, did you really think t?

KROG. If it were as you say, why you write to me as you did at the e?

MRS. L. I could do nothing else. As ad to break with you, it was my y also to put an end to all that you for me.

KROG. [*wringing his hands*]. So that it. And all this—only for the sake noney!

MRS. L. You mustn't forget that I a helpless mother and two little thers. We couldn't wait for you, s; your prospects seemed hopeless n.

KROG. That may be so, but you had right to throw me over for any one 's sake.

MRS. L. Indeed I don't know. Many me did I ask myself if I had the ıt to do it.

KROG. [*more gently.*] When I lost , it was as if all the solid ground t from under my feet. Look at now—I am a shipwrecked man ging to a bit of wreckage.

MRS. L. But help may be near.

KROG. It *was* near; but then you e and stood in my way.

MRS. L. Unintentionally, Nils. It only to-day that I learnt it was r place I was going to take in the k.

KROG. I believe you, if you say so. now that you know it, are you going to give it up to me?

MRS. L. No, because that would not efit you in the least.

KROG. Oh, benefit, benefit—I would e done it whether or no.

MRS. L. I have learnt to act prudently. Life, and hard, bitter necessity have taught me that.

KROG. And life has taught me not to believe in fine speeches.

MRS. L. Then life has taught you something very reasonable. But deeds you must believe in?

KROG. What do you mean by that?

MRS. L. You said you were like a shipwrecked man clinging to some wreckage.

KROG. I had good reason to say so.

MRS. L. Well, I am like a shipwrecked woman clinging to some wreckage—no one to mourn for, no one to care for.

KROG. It was your own choice.

MRS. L. There was no other choice —then.

KROG. Well, what now?

MRS. L. Nils, how would it be if we two shipwrecked people could join forces?

KROG. What are you saying?

MRS. L. Two on the same pieces of wreckage would stand a better chance than each on their own.

KROG. Christine!

MRS. L. What do you suppose brought me to town?

KROG. Do you mean that you gave me a thought?

MRS. L. I could not endure life without work. All my life, as long as I can remember, I have worked, and it has been my greatest and only pleasure. But now I am quite alone in the world —my life is so dreadfully empty and I feel so forsaken. There is not the least pleasure in working for one's self. Nils, give me someone and something to work for.

KROG. I don't trust that. It is no-

thing but a woman's overstrained sense of generosity that prompts you to make such an offer of yourself.

MRS. L. Have you ever noticed anything of the sort in me?

KROG. Could you really do it? Tell me—do you know all about my past life?

MRS. L. Yes.

KROG. And do you know what they think of me here?

MRS. L. You seemed to me to imply that with me you might have been quite another man.

KROG. I am certain of it.

MRS. L. Is it too late now?

KROG. Christine, are you saying this deliberately? Yes, I am sure you are. I see it in your face. Have you really the courage, then—?

MRS. L. I want to be a mother to someone, and your children need a mother. We two need each other. Nils, I have faith in your real character—I can dare anything with you.

KROG. [*grasps her hands*]. Thanks, thanks, Christine! Now I shall find a way to clear myself in the eyes of the world. Ah, but I forgot—

MRS. L. [*listening*]. Hush! The Tarantella! Go, go!

KROG. Why? What is it?

MRS. L. Do you hear them up there? When that is over, we may expect them back.

KROG. Yes, yes—I will go. But it is all no use. Of course you are not aware what steps I have taken in the matter of the Helmers.

MRS. L. Yes, I know all about that.

KROG. And in spite of that have you the courage to—?

MRS. L. I understand very well to what lengths a man like you might be driven by despair.

KROG. If I could only undo what I have done!

MRS. L. You cannot. Your letter is lying in the letter-box now.

KROG. Are you sure of that?

MRS. L. Quite sure, but—

KROG. [*with a searching look at her*] Is that what it all means?—that you want to save your friend at any cost? Tell me frankly. Is that it?

MRS. L. Nils, a woman who has once sold herself for another's sake, doesn't do it a second time.

KROG. I will ask for my letter back.

MRS. L. No, no.

KROG. Yes, of course I will. I will wait here till Helmer comes; I will tell him he must give me my letter back—that it only concerns my dismissal—that he is not to read it—

MRS. L. No, Nils, you must not recall your letter.

KROG. But, tell me, wasn't it for that very purpose that you asked me to meet you here?

MRS. L. In my first moment of fright, it was. But twenty-four hours have elapsed since then, and in that time I have witnessed incredible things in this house. Helmer must know all about it. This unhappy secret must be disclosed; they must have a complete understanding between them, which is impossible with all this concealment and falsehood going on.

KROG. Very well, if you will take the responsibility. But there is one thing I can do in any case, and I shall do it at once.

MRS. L. [*listening.*] You must be quick and go! The dance is over; we are not safe a moment longer.

KROG. I will wait for you below.

MRS. L. Yes, do. You must see me ack to my door.

KROG. I have never had such an mazing piece of good fortune in my fe! [*Goes out through the outer oor. The door between the room and he hall remains open.*]

MRS. L. [*tidying up the room and aying her hat and cloak ready*]. Vhat a difference! What a difference! omeone to work for and live for— home to bring comfort into. That I ill do, indeed. I wish they would be uick and come— [*Listens.*] Ah, here they are now. I must put on ıy things. [*Takes up her hat and loak.* HELMER'S *and* NORA'S *voices re heard outside; a key is turned, nd* HELMER *brings* NORA *almost by orce into the hall. She is in an Italian ostume with a large black shawl ound her; he is in evening dress, and black domino which is flying open.*]

NORA [*hanging back in the doorway, nd struggling with him*]. No, no, no! -don't take me in. I want to go up- airs again; I don't want to leave so arly.

HEL. But, my dearest Nora—

NORA. Please, Torvald dear—please, *lease*—only an hour more.

HEL. Not a single minute, my sweet ora. You know that was our agree- ent. Come along into the room; you e catching cold standing there. [*He ings her gently into the room, in pite of her resistance.*]

MRS. L. Good-evening.

NORA. Christine!

HEL. You here, so late, Mrs. Linde?

MRS. L. Yes, you must excuse me; I as so anxious to see Nora in her dress.

NORA. Have you been sitting here waiting for me?

MRS. L. Yes, unfortunately I came too late, you had already gone upstairs; and I thought I couldn't go away again without having seen you.

HEL. [*taking off* NORA'S *shawl*]. Yes, take a good look at her. I think she is worth looking at. Isn't she charming, Mrs. Linde?

MRS. L. Yes, indeed she is.

HEL. Doesn't she look remarkably pretty? Everyone thought so at the dance. But she is terribly self-willed, this sweet little person. What are we to do with her? You will hardly believe that I had almost to bring her away by force.

NORA. Torvald, you will repent not having let me stay, even if it were only for half an hour.

HEL. Listen to her, Mrs. Linde! She had danced her Tarantella, and it had been a tremendous success, as it deserved—although possibly the performance was a trifle too realistic—a little more so, I mean, than was strictly compatible with the limitations of art. But never mind about that! The chief thing is, she had made a success—she had made a tremendous success. Do you think I was going to let her remain there after that, and spoil the effect? No, indeed! I took my charming little Capri maiden—my capricious little Capri maiden, I should say—on my arm; took one quick turn round the room; a curtsey on either side, and, as they say in novels, the beautiful apparition disappeared. An exit ought always to be effective, Mrs. Linde; but that is what I cannot make Nora understand. Pooh! this room is hot. [*Throws his domino on a chair, and*

opens the door of his room.] Hullo! it's all dark in here. Oh, of course—excuse me—. [*He goes in, and lights some candles.*]

NORA [*in a hurried and breathless whisper*]. Well?

MRS. L. [*in a low voice*]. I have had a talk with him.

NORA. Yes, and—

MRS. L. Nora, you must tell your husband all about it.

NORA [*in an expressionless voice*]. I knew it.

MRS. L. You have nothing to be afraid of as far as Krogstad is concerned; but you must tell him.

NORA. I won't tell him.

MRS. L. Then the letter will.

NORA. Thank you, Christine. Now I know what I must do. Hush—!

HEL. [*coming in again*]. Well, Mrs. Linde, have you admired her?

MRS. L. Yes, and now I will say good-night.

HEL. What, already? Is this yours, this knitting?

MRS. L. [*taking it*]. Yes, thank you, I had very nearly forgotten it.

HEL. So you knit?

MRS. L. Of course.

HEL. Do you know, you ought to embroider.

MRS. L. Really? Why?

HEL. Yes, it's far more becoming. Let me show you. You hold the embroidery thus in your left hand, and use the needle with the right—like this—with a long easy sweep. Do you see?

MRS. L. Yes, perhaps—

HEL. Yes, but in the case of knitting—that can never be anything but ungraceful; look here—the arms close together, the knitting-needles going up and down—it has a sort of Chinese effect—. That was really excellent champagne they gave us.

MRS. L. Well,—good-night, Nora, and don't be self-willed any more.

HEL. That's right, Mrs. Linde.

MRS. L. Good-night, Mr. Helmer.

HEL. [*accompanying her to the door*]. Good-night, good-night. I hope you will get home all right. I should be very happy to—but you haven't any great distance to go. Good-night, good-night. [*She goes out; he shuts the door after her, and comes in again.*] Ah!—at last we have got rid of her. She is a frightful bore, that woman.

NORA. Aren't you very tired, Torvald?

HEL. No, not in the least.

NORA. Nor sleepy?

HEL. Not a bit. On the contrary I feel extraordinarily lively. And you?—you really look both tired and sleepy.

NORA. Yes, I am very tired. I want to go to sleep at once.

HEL. There, you see it was quite right of me not to let you stay there any longer.

NORA. Everything you do is quite right, Torvald.

HEL. [*kissing her on the forehead*]. Now my little skylark is speaking reasonably. Did you notice what good spirits Rank was in this evening?

NORA. Really? Was he? I didn't speak to him at all.

HEL. And I very little, but I have not for a long time seen him in such good form. [*Looks for a while at her and then goes nearer to her.*] It is delightful to be at home by ourselves again, to be all alone with you—you

ascinating, charming little darling!

NORA. Don't look at me like that orvald.

HEL. Why shouldn't I look at my earest treasure?—at all the beauty at is mine, all my very own?

NORA. [*going to the other side of e table*]. You mustn't say things like at to me to-night.

HEL. [*following her*]. You have ill got the Tarantella in your blood, see. And it makes you more capti- ting than ever. Listen—the guests e beginning to go now. [*In a lower ice.*] Nora—soon the whole house will quiet.

NORA. Yes, I hope so.

HEL. Yes, my own darling Nora. you know, that when I am out at party with you like this, why I speak little to you, keep away from you, d only send a stolen glance in your rection now and then?—do you know y I do that? It is because I make lieve to myself that we are secretly love, and you are my secretly prom- d bride, and that no one suspects ere is anything between us.

NORA. Yes, yes—I know very well ur thoughts are with me all the time.

HEL. And when we are leaving, and am putting the shawl over your autiful, young shoulders—on your ely neck—then I imagine that you e my young bride and that we have st come from our wedding, and I am nging you, for the first time, into r home—to be alone with you for the st time—quite alone with my shy le darling! All this evening I have ged for nothing but you. When I tched the seductive figures of the rantella, my blood was on fire; I ld endure it no longer, and that was why I brought you down so early—

NORA. Go away, Torvald! You must let me go. I won't—

HEL. What's that? You're joking, my little Nora! You won't—you won't? Am I not your husband— [*A knock is heard at the outer door.*]

NORA. [*starting*]. Did you hear—?

HEL. [*going into the hall*]. Who is it?

RANK. [*outside*]. It is I. May I come in for a moment?

HEL. [*in a fretful whisper*]. Oh, what does he want now? [*Aloud.*] Wait a minute? [*Unlocks the door.*] Come, that's kind of you not to pass by our door.

RANK. I thought I heard your voice, and I felt as if I should like to look in. [*With a swift glance round.*] Ah, yes!—these dear familiar rooms. You are very happy and cosy in here, you two.

HEL. It seems to me that you looked after yourself pretty well up- stairs too.

RANK. Excellently. Why shouldn't I? Why shouldn't one enjoy everything in this world?—at any rate as much as one can, and as long as one can. The wine was capital—

HEL. Especially the champagne.

RANK. So you noticed that too? It is almost incredible how much I man- aged to put away!

NORA. Torvald drank a great deal of chanpagne tonight, too.

RANK. Did he?

NORA. Yes, and he is always in such good spirits afterwards.

RANK. Well, why should one not enjoy a merry evening after a well spent day?

HEL. Well spent? I am afraid I can't take credit for that.

RANK. [*clapping him on the back*]. But I can, you know!

RANK. Exactly.

NORA. Doctor Rank, you must have been occupied with some scientific investigation to-day.

HEL. Just listen!—little Nora talking about scientific investigations!

NORA. And may I congratulate you on the result?

RANK. Indeed you may.

NORA. Was it favorable, then?

RANK. The best possible, for both doctor and patient—certainty.

NORA. [*quickly and searchingly*]. Certainty?

RANK. Absolute certainty. So wasn't I entitled to make a merry evening of it after that?

NORA. Yes, you certainly were. Doctor Rank.

HEL. I think so too, so long as you don't have to pay for it in the morning.

RANK. Oh well, one can't have anything in this life without paying for it.

NORA. Doctor Rank—are you fond of fancy-dress balls?

RANK. Yes, if there is a fine lot of pretty costumes.

NORA. Tell me—what shall we two wear at the next?

HEL. Little featherbrain!—are you thinking of the next already?

RANK. We two? Yes, I can tell you. You shall go as a good fairy—

HEL. Yes, but what do you suggest as an appropriate costume for that?

RANK. Let your wife go dressed just as she is in everyday life.

HEL. That was really very prettily turned. But can't you tell us what you will be?

RANK. Yes, my dear friend, I have quite made up my mind about that.

HEL. Well?

RANK. At the next fancy-dress ball I shall be invisible.

HEL. That's a good joke!

RANK. There is a big black hat—have you ever heard of hats that make you invisible? If you put one on, no one can see you.

HEL. [*suppressing a smile*]. Yes, you are quite right.

RANK. But I am clean forgetting what I came for. Helmer, give me a cigar—one of the dark Havanas.

HEL. With the greatest pleasure. [*Offers him his case.*]

RANK. [*takes a cigar and cuts off the end.*] Thanks.

NORA. [*striking a match*]. Let me give you a light.

RANK. Thank you. [*She holds the match for him to light his cigar.*] And now good-bye!

HEL. Good-bye, good-bye, dear old man!

NORA. Sleep well, Doctor Rank.

RANK. Thank you for that wish.

NORA. Wish me the same.

RANK. You? Well, if you want me to sleep well! And thanks for the light. [*He nods to them both and goes out.*]

HEL. [*in a subdued voice*]. He has drunk more than he ought.

NORA. [*absently*]. Maybe. [HEL. *takes a bunch of keys out of his pocket and goes into the hall.*] Torvald! what are you going to do there?

HEL. Empty the letter-box; it is quite full; there will be no room to put the newspaper in to-morrow morning.

NORA. Are you going to work to-night?

HEL. You know quite well I'm not

hat is this? Some one has been at the ck.

NORA. At the lock—?

HEL. Yes, someone has. What can mean? I should never have thought e maid—. Here is a broken hairpin. ora it is one of yours.

NORA. [*quickly*]. Then it must have en the children—

HEL. Then you must get them out those ways. There, at last I have t it open. [*Takes out the contents of e letter-box, and calls to the kitchen.*] elen!—Helen, put out the light over e front door. [*Goes back into the om and shuts the door into the hall. e holds out his hand full of letters.*] ok at that—look what a heap of em there are. [*Turning them over.*] hat on earth is that?

NORA. [*at the window*]. The let—No! Torvald, no!

HEL. Two cards—of Ranks.

NORA. Of Doctor Rank's?

HEL. [*looking at them*]. Doctor nk. They were on the top. He must ve put them in when he went out.

NORA. Is there anything written on em?

HEL. There is a black cross over e name. Look there—what an uncom-rtable idea! It looks as if he were nouncing his own death.

NORA. It is just what he is doing.

HEL. What? Do you know anything out it? Has he said anything to you?

NORA. Yes. He told me that when e cards came it would be his leave ing from us. He means to shut him-f up and die.

HEL. My poor old friend. Certainly new we should not have him very g with us. But so soon! And so he hides himself away like a wounded animal.

NORA. If it has to happen, it is best it should be without a word—don't you think so, Torvald?

HEL. [*walking up and down*]. He had so grown into our lives. I can't think of him as having gone out of them. He, with his sufferings and his loneliness, was like a cloudy background to our sunlit happiness. Well perhaps it is best so. For him, anyway. [*Standing still.*] And perhaps for us us too, Nora. We two are thrown quite upon each other now. [*Puts his arms round her.*] My darling wife, I don't feel as if I could hold you tight enough. Do you know, Nora, I have often wished that you might be threatened by some great danger, so that I might risk my life's blood, and everything, for your sake.

NORA. [*disengages herself, and says firmly and decidedly*]. Now you must read your letters, Torvald.

HEL. No, no; not to-night. I want to be with you, my darling wife.

NORA. With the thought of your friend's death—

HEL. You are right, it has affected us both. Something ugly has come between us—the thought of the horrors of death. We must try and rid our minds of that. Until then—we will each go to our own room.

NORA. [*hanging on his neck*]. Good-night Torvald—Good-night!

HEL. [*kissing her on the forehead*]. Good-night my little singing-bird. Sleep sound, Nora. Now I will read my letters through. [*He takes his letters and goes into his room, shutting the door after him.*]

NORA. [*gropes distractedly about,*

seizes HELMER'S *domino, throws it about her, while she says in quick, hoarse, spasmodic whispers*]. Never to see him again. Never! Never! [*Puts her shawl over her head.*] Never to see my children again either—never again. Never! Never!—Ah! the icy, black water—the unfathomable depths—If only it were over! He has got it now—now he is reading it. Good-bye, Torvald and my children! [*She is about to rush out through the hall, when* HELMER *opens his door hurriedly and stands with an open letter in his hand.*]

HEL. Nora!

NORA. Ah!—

HEL. What is this? Do you know what is in this letter?

NORA. Yes, I know. Let me go! Let me get out!

HEL. [*holding her back*]. Where are you going?

NORA. [*trying to get free*]. You shan't save me, Torvald!

HEL. [*reeling*]. True? Is this true, that I read here? Horrible! No, no—it is impossible that it is true.

NORA. It is true. I have loved you above everything else in the world.

HEL. Oh, don't let us have any silly excuses.

NORA. [*taking a step towards him*]. Torvald—!

HEL. Miserable creature — what have you done?

NORA. Let me go. You shall not suffer for my sake. You shall not take it upon yourself.

HEL. No tragedy airs, please. [*Locks the hall door.*] Here you shall stay and give me an explanation. Do you understand what you have done? Answer me? Do you understand what you have done?

NORA. [*looks steadily at him and says with a growing look of coldness in her face*]. Yes, now I am beginning to understand thoroughly.

HEL. [*walking about the room*]. What a horrible awakening! All these eight years—she who was my joy and pride—a hypocrite, a liar—worse, worse—a criminal! The unutterable ugliness of it all!—For shame! For shame! [NORA *is silent and looks steadily at him. He stops in front of her.*] I ought to have suspected that something of the sort would happen. I ought to have foreseen it. All your father's want of principle—be silent—all your father's want of principle has come out in you. No religion, no morality, no sense of duty—. How I am punished for having winked at what he did! I did it for your sake, and this is how you repay me.

NORA. Yes, that's just it.

HEL. Now you have destroyed all my happiness. You have ruined all my future. It is horrible to think of! I am in the power of an unscrupulous man; he can do what he likes with me, ask anything he likes of me, give me any orders he pleases—I dare not refuse. And I must sink to such miserable depths because of a thoughtless woman!

NORA. When I am out of the way, you will be free.

HEL. No fine speeches, please. Your father had always plenty of those ready too. What good would it be to me if you were out of the way, as you say? Not the slightest. He can make the affair known everywhere; and if he does, I may be falsely suspected of having been a party to your criminal action. Very likely people will think

was behind it all—that it was I who rompted you! And I have to thank ou for all this—you whom I have nerished during the whole of our mar- ied life. Do you understand now what is you have done for me?

NORA. [*coldly and quietly*]. Yes.

HEL. It is so incredible that I can't ake it in. But we must come to some nderstanding. Take off that shawl. ake it off, I tell you. I must try and ppease him in some way or another. he matter must be hushed up at any ost. And as for you and me, it must ppear as if everything between us ere just as before—but naturally only the eyes of the world. You will still emain in my house, that is a matter f course. But I shall not allow you to ring up the children; I dare not trust em to you. To think that I should be bliged to say so to one whom I have ved so dearly, and whom I still—. o, that is all over. From this moment ppiness is not the question; all that ncerns us is to save the remains, the agments, the appearance—

ring is heard at the front-door bell.]

HEL. [*With a start*]. What is that? late! Can the worst—Can he—?

ide yourself, Nora. Say you are ill.

NORA. [*stands motionless.* HELMER *es and unlocks the hall door.*]

MAID. [*half dressed comes to the or*]. A letter for the mistress.

HEL. Give it to me. [*Takes the let- r, and shuts the door.*] Yes, it is from m. You shall not have it; I will read myself.

NORA. Yes, read it.

HEL. [*standing by the lamp*]. I arcely have the courage to do it. It ay mean ruin for the both of us. No, must know. [*Tears open the letter, runs his eye over a few lines, looks at a paper enclosed, and gives a shout of joy.*] Nora! [*She looks at him question- ingly*] Nora!—No, I must read it once again—. Yes, it is true! I am saved! Nora, I am saved!

NORA. And I?

HEL. You too, of course; we are both saved, both you and I. Look, he sends you your bond back. He says he regrets and repents—that a happy change in his life—never mind what he says! We are saved, Nora! No one can do anything to you. Oh, Nora, Nora;—no, first I must destroy these hateful things. Let me see—. [*Takes a look at the bond.*] No, No, I won't look at it. The whole thing shall be nothing but a bad dream to me. [*Tears up the bond and both letters, throws them all into the stove and watches them burn.*] There—now it doesn't exist any longer. He says that since Christmas Eve you—. These must have been three dreadful days for you, Nora.

NORA. I have fought a hard fight these three days.

HEL. And suffered agonies, and seen no way out but—. No, we won't call any of the horrors to mind. We will only shout with joy, and keep saying, "It's all over! It's all over!" Listen to me, Nora. You don't seem to realize that it is all over. What is this? —such a cold, set face! My poor little Nora, I quite understand; you don't feel as if you could believe that I have forgiven you. But it is true, Nora, I swear it; I have forgiven you everything. I know that what you did you did out of love for me.

NORA. That is true.

HEL. You have loved me as a wife ought to love her husband. Only you

had not sufficient knowledge to judge of the means you used. But do you suppose you are any the less dear to me, because you don't understand how to act on your own responsibility? No, no; only lean on me; I will advise and direct you. I should not be a man if this womanly helplessness did not just give you a double attractiveness in my eyes. You must not think any more about the hard things I said in my first moment of consternation, when I thought everything was going to overwhelm me. I have forgiven you, Nora; I swear to you I have forgiven you.

NORA. Thank you for your forgiveness. [*She goes out through the door to the right.*]

HEL. No, don't go—. [*Looks in.*] What are you doing in there?

NORA [*from within*]. Taking off my fancy dress.

HEL. [*standing at the open door*]. Yes, do. Try and calm yourself, and make your mind easy again, my frightened little singing-bird. Be at rest, and feel secure; I have broad wings to shelter you under. [*Walks up and down by the door.*] How warm and cosy our home is, Nora. Here is shelter for you; here I will protect you like a hunted dove that I have saved from a hawk's claws; I will bring peace to your poor beating heart. It will come, little by little, Nora, believe me. To-morrow morning you will look upon it all quite differently; soon everything will be just as it was before. Very soon you won't need me to assure you that I have forgiven you; you will yourself feel the certainty that I have done so. Can you suppose I should ever think of such a thing as repudiating you, or even reproaching you? You have no idea what a true man's heart is like, Nora. There is something so indescribably sweet and satisfying, to a man, in the knowledge that he has forgiven his wife—forgiven her freely and with all his heart. It seems as if that had made her, as it were, doubly his own; he has given her a new life so to speak; and she has in a way become both wife and child to him. So you shall be for me after this, my little scared helpless darling. Have no anxiety about anything, Nora; only be frank and open with me, and I will serve as will and conscience both to you— What is this? Not gone to bed? Have you changed your things?

NORA. [*in everyday dress*]. Yes, Torvald, I have changed my things now.

HEL. But what for?—so late as this.

NORA. I shall not sleep to-night.

HEL. But my dear Nora—

NORA. [*looking at her watch*]. It is not so very late. Sit down here, Torvald. You and I have much to say to one another. [*She sits down at one side of the table.*]

HEL. Nora—what is this?—this cold, set face?

NORA. Sit down. It will take some time; I have a lot to talk over with you.

HEL. [*sits down at the opposite side of the table*]. You alarm me, Nora!—and I don't understand you.

NORA. No, that is just it. You don't understand me, and I have never understood you either—before to-night. No, you mustn't interrupt me. You must simply listen to what I say. Torvald, this is a settling of accounts.

HEL. What do you mean by that?

NORA. [*after a short silence*]. Isn't there one thing that strikes you as

ange in our sitting here like this?

HEL. What is that?

NORA. We have been married now ht years. Does it not occur to you t this is the first time we two, you d I, husband and wife, have had a ious conversation.

HEL. What do you mean serious?

NORA. In all these eight years— ger than that—from the very begin- g of our acquaintance, we have er exchanged a word in any serious ject.

HEL. Was it likely that I would be tinually and forever telling you ut worries that you could not help to bear?

NORA. I am not speaking about siness matters. I say that we have er sat down in earnest together to and get at the bottom of anything.

HEL. But, dearest Nora, would it e been any good to you?

NORA. That is just it; you have er understood me. I have been atly wronged, Torvald—first by a and then by you.

HEL. What! By us two—by us two, have loved you better than anyone in the world?

NORA. [*shaking her head*]. You e never loved me. You have only ught it pleasant to be in love with

HEL. Nora, what do I hear you ing?

NORA. It is perfectly true, Torvald. en I was at home with papa, he told his opinion about everything, and so ad the same opinions; and if I dif- ed from him I concealed the fact, ause he would not have liked it. He ed me his doll-child, and he played me just as I used to play with my dolls. And when I came to live with you—.

HEL. What sort of an expression is that to use about our marriage?

NORA. [*undisturbed*]. I mean that I was simply transferred from papa's hand's to yours. You arranged every- thing according to your own taste, and so I got the same tastes as you—or else I pretended to, I am really not quite sure which—I think sometimes the one and sometimes the other. When I look back on it, it seems to me as if I had been living here like a poor woman— just from hand to mouth. I have existed merely to perform tricks for you, Tor- vald. But you would have it so. You and papa have committed a great sin against me. It is your fault that I have made nothing of my life.

HEL. How unreasonable and how ungrateful you are, Nora! Have you not been happy here?

NORA. No, I have never been happy. I thought I was, but it has never really been so.

HEL. Not—not happy!

NORA. No, only merry. And you have always been so kind to me. But our home has been nothing but a play- room. I have been your doll-wife, just as at home I was papa's doll-child; and here the children have been my dolls. I thought it great fun when you played with me, just as they thought it great fun when I played with them. That is what our marriage has been, Torvald.

HEL. There is some truth in what you say—exaggerated and strained as your view of it is. But for the future it shall be different. Playtime shall be over, and lesson-time shall begin.

NORA. Whose lessons? Mine or the children's?

HEL. Both yours and the childrens, my darling Nora.

NORA. Alas, Torvald, you are not the man to educate me into being a proper wife for you.

HEL. And you can say that!

NORA. And I—how am I fitted to bring up the children?

HEL. Nora!

NORA. Didn't you say so yourself a little while ago—that you dare not trust me to bring them up?

HEL. In a moment of anger! Why do you pay any heed to that?

NORA. Indeed, you were perfectly right. I am not fit for the task. There is another task I must undertake first. I must try and educate myself—you are not the man to help me in that. I must do that for myself. And that is why I am going to leave you now.

HEL. [*springing up*]. What do you say?

NORA. I must stand quite alone, if I am to understand myself and everything about me. It is for that reason that I cannot remain with you any longer.

HEL. Nora, Nora!

NORA. I am going away from here now, at once. I am sure Christine will take me in for the night—

HEL. You are out of your mind! I won't allow it! I forbid you!

NORA. It is no use forbidding me anything any longer. I will take with me what belongs to myself. I will take nothing from you, either now or later.

HEL. What sort of madness is this!

NORA. To-morrow I shall go home—I mean, to my old home. It will be easiest for me to find something to do there.

HEL. You blind, foolish woman!

NORA. I must try and get some sense, Torvald.

HEL. To desert your home, your husband and your children! And you don't consider what people will say!

NORA. I cannot consider that at all. I only know that it is necessary for me.

HEL. It's shocking. This is how you would neglect your most sacred duties.

NORA. What do you consider my most sacred duties?

HEL. Do I need to tell you that? Are they not your duties to your husband and your children?

NORA. I have other duties just as sacred.

HEL. That you have not. What duties could those be?

NORA. Duties to myself.

HEL. Before all else, you are a wife and a mother.

NORA. I don't believe that any longer. I believe that before all else I am a reasonable human being, just as you are—or, at all events, that I must try and become one. I know quite well, Torvald, that most people would think you right, and that views of that kind are to be found in books; but I can no longer content myself with what most people say, or with what is found in books. I must think over things for myself and get to understand them.

HEL. Can you understand your place in your own home? Have you not a reliable guide in such matters as that?—have you no religion.

NORA. I am afraid, Torvald, I do not exactly know what religion is.

HEL. What are you saying?

NORA. I know nothing but what the clergyman said, when I went to be confirmed. He told us that religion was this, and that, and the other. When I

away from all this, and am alone, will look into that matter too. I will if what the clergyman said is true, at all events if it is true for me.

HEL. This is unheard of in a girl of ur age! But if religion cannot lead u aright, let me try and awaken your nscience. I suppose you have some ral sense? Or—answer me—am I to nk you have none?

NORA. I assure you, Torvald, that not an easy question to answer. I lly don't know. The thing perplexes altogether. I only know that you I look at it in quite a different nt. I am learning, too, that the law is te another thing from what I sup- sed; but I find it impossible to con- ce myself that the law is right. Ac- ding to it a woman has no right to re her old dying father, or to save husband's life. I can't believe that.

HEL. You talk like a child. You n't understand the conditions of the rld in which you live.

NORA. No, I don't. But now I am ng to try. I am going to see if I can ke out who is right, the world or I.

HEL. You are ill, Nora; you are de- ous; I almost think you are out of r mind.

NORA. I have never felt my mind so r and certain as to-night.

HEL. And is it with a clear and cer- n mind that you forsake your hus- d and your children?

NORA. Yes, it is.

HEL. Then there is only one pos- e explanation.

NORA. What is that?

HEL. You do not love me any more.

NORA. No, that is just it.

HEL. Nora!—and you can say that?

NORA. It gives me great pain, Tor- vald, for you have always been so kind to me, but I cannot help it. I do not love you any more.

HEL. [*regaining his composure*]. Is that a clear and certain conviction too?

NORA. Yes, absolutely clear and certain. That is the reason why I will not stay here any longer.

HEL. And can you tell me what I have done to forfeit your love?

NORA. Yes, indeed I can. It was to-night, when the wonderful thing did not happen; then I saw you were not the man I had thought you.

HEL. Explain yourself better—I don't understand you.

NORA. I have waited so patiently for eight years; for, goodness knows I knew very well that wonderful things don't happen every day. Then this horrible misfortune came upon me; and then I felt quite certain that the wonderful thing was going to happen at last. When Krogstad's letter was lying out there, never for a moment did I imagine that you would consent to accept this man's conditions. I was so absolutely certain that you would say to him: Publish the thing to the whole world. And when that was done—

HEL. Yes, what then?—when I had exposed my wife to shame and disgrace?

NORA. When that was done, I was so absolutely certain, you would come forward and take everything upon your self, and say; I am the guilty one.

HEL. Nora—!

NORA. You mean that I would never have accepted such a sacrifice on your part? No, of course not. But what would my assurances have been worth against yours? That was the wonderful thing which I hoped for and feared;

and it was to prevent that, that I wanted to kill myself.

HEL. I would gladly work night and day for you, Nora—bear sorrow and want for your sake. But no man would sacrifice his honour for the one he loves.

NORA. It is a thing hundreds of thousands of women have done.

HEL. Oh, you think and talk like a heedless child.

NORA. Maybe. But you neither think nor talk like the man I could bind myself to. As soon as your fear was over—and it was not fear for what threatened me, but for what might happen to you—when the whole thing was past, as far as you were concerned it was exactly as if nothing at all had happened. Exactly as before, I was your little sky-lark, your doll, which you would in the future treat with doubly gentle care, because it was so brittle and fragile. [*Getting up.*] Torvald—it was then it dawned upon me that for eight years I had been living here with a strange man and had borne him three children—. Oh, I can't bear to think of it! I could tear myself into little bits!

HEL. [*sadly*]. I see, I see. An abyss has opened between us—there is no denying it. But, Nora, would it not be possible to fill it up?

NORA. As I am now, I am no wife for you.

HEL. I have it in me to become a different man.

NORA. Perhaps—if your doll is taken away from you.

HEL. But to part!—to part from you! No, no, Nora, I can't understand that idea.

NORA. [*going out to the right*]. That makes it all the more certain that it must be done. [*She comes back with her cloak and hat and a small bag which she puts on a chair by the table.*]

HEL. Nora. Nora, not now! Wait till to-morrow.

NORA. [*putting on her cloak*]. I cannot spend the night in a strange man's room.

HEL. But can't we live here like brother and sister—?

NORA. [*putting on her hat*]. You know very well that would not last long. [*Puts the shawl round her.*] Goodbye, Torvald. I won't see the little ones. I know they are in better hands than mine. As I am now, I can be of no use to them.

HEL. But some day, Nora—some day?

NORA. How can I tell? I have no idea what is going to become of me.

HEL. But you are my wife, whatever becomes of you.

NORA. Listen, Torvald. I have heard that when a wife deserts her husband's house, as I am doing now, he is legally freed from all obligations towards her. In any case I set you free from all your obligations. You are not to feel yourself bound in the slightest way, any more than I shall. There must be perfect freedom on both sides. See, here is your ring back. Give me mine.

HEL. That too?

NORA. That too.

HEL. Here it is.

NORA. That's right. Now it is all over. I have put the keys here. The maids know all about everything in the house—better than I do. To-morrow, after I have left her, Christine will come here and pack up my own things

t I brought with me from home. I l have them sent after me.

HEL. All over! All over!—Nora, ll you never think of me again?

NORA. I know I shall often think of and the children and this house.

HEL. May I write to you, Nora?

NORA. No—never. You must not do t.

HEL. But at least let me send you—

NORA. Nothing—nothing—

HEL. Let me help you if you are want.

NORA. No. I can receive nothing m a stranger.

HEL. Nora—can I never be anyng more than a stranger to you?

NORA. [*taking her bag*]. Ah, Tord, the most wonderful thing of all would have to happen.

HEL. Tell me what that would be!

NORA. Both you and I would have to be so changed that—. Oh, Torvald, I don't believe any longer in wonderful things happening.

HEL. But I will believe in it. Tell me? So changed that—?

NORA. That our life together would be a real wedlock. Good-bye. [*She goes out through the hall.*]

HEL. [*sinks down on a chair at the door and buries his face in his hands*]. Nora! Nora! [*Looks round, and rises.*] Empty. She is gone. [*A hope flashes across his mind.*] The most wonderful thing of all—?

[*The sound of a door shutting is heard from below.*]

VOLUME V

The League of Youth

PERSONS OF THE PLAY.

HAMBERLAIN BRATSBERG, *owner of iron-works.*
RIK BRATSBERG, *his son, a merchant.*
HORA, *his daughter.*
ELMA, *Erik's wife.*
OCTOR FIELDBO, *physician at the Chamberlain's works.*
ENSGARD, *a lawyer.*
ONS MONSEN, *of Stonelee.*
ASTIAN MONSEN, *his son.*
AGNA, *his daughter.*
ELLE, *student of theology, tutor at Stonelee.*
NGDAL, *manager of the iron-works.*
NDERS LUNDESTAD, *landowner.*
ANIEL HEIRE.
ADAM RUNDHOLMEN, *widow of a storekeeper and publican.*
SLAKSEN, *a printer.*
MAID-SERVANT AT THE CHAMBERLAINS.
WAITER.
WAITRESS AT MADAM RUNDHOLMEN'S.
wnspeople, Guests at the Chamberlain's, etc., etc.

e action takes place in the neighborhood of the iron-works, not far from a market town in Southern Norway.

ACT I

SCENE—*The Seventeenth of May. A pular fête in the Chamberlain's unds. Music and dancing in the ckground. Coloured lights among trees. In the middle, somewhat var[illegible] the back[illegible]n. To the right, the entrance to a large refreshment-tent; before it, a table with benches. In the foreground on the left, another table, decorated with flowers and surrounded with loungingchairs.*

A Crowd of People. LUNDESTAD, *with a committee-badge at his buttonhole, stands on the rostrum.* RINGDAL, *also with a committee-badge, at the table on the left.*

LUN. Therefore, friends and fellow citizens, I drink to our freedom! As we have inherited it from our fathers, so will we preserve it for ourselves and for our children! Three cheers for the day! Three cheers for the Seventeenth of May!

THE CROWD. Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!

RIN. [*as* LUNDESTAD *descends from the rostrum*]. And one cheer more for old Lundestad!

SOME OF THE CROWD [*hissing*]. Ss! Ss!

MANY VOICES [*drowning the others*]. Hurrah for Lundestad! Long live old Lundestad! Hurrah!

[*The Crowd gradually disperses.* MONSEN, *his son* BASTIAN, STENSGARD, *and* ASLAKSEN *make their way forward through the throng.*]

MON. 'Pon my soul, it's time he was laid on the shelf!

ASL. It was the local situation he was talking about! Ho-ho!

MON. He has made the same speech

year after year as long as I can remember. Come over here.

STEN. No, no, not that way, Mr. Monsen. We are quite deserting your daughter.

MON. Oh, Ragna will find us again.

BAS. Young Helle is with her.

STEN. Helle?

MON. Yes, Helle, but [*nudging* STENSGARD *familiarly*] you have me here, and the rest of us. Come on! Here we shall be out of the crowd, and can discuss more fully what—

[*Has meanwhile taken a seat beside the table on the left.*]

RIN. [*approaching*]. Excuse me Mr. Monsen—that table is reserved.

STEN. Reserved? For whom?

RIN. For the Chamberlain's party.

STEN. Oh, confound the Chamberlain's party! There's none of them here.

RIN. We expect them every minute.

STEN. Let them sit somewhere else. [*Takes a chair.*]

LUN. [*laying his hand on the chair*]. No, the table is reserved, and there's an end of it.

MON. [*rising*]. Come, Mr. Stensgard; there are just as good seats over there. [*Crosses to the right*]. Waiter! Ha, no waiters either. The Committee should have seen to that in time. Oh, Aslaksen, just go in and get us four bottles of champagne. Order the dearest; tell them to put it down to Monsen!

[ASLAKSEN *goes into the tent; the three others seat themselves.*]

LUN. [*goes quietly over to them and addresses* STENSGARD]. I hope you won't take it ill——

MON. Take it ill! Good gracious, no!

LUN. [*still to* STENSGARD]. It's n my doing; it's the Committee that cided—

MON. Of course. The Commit orders, and we must obey.

LUN. [*as before*]. You see, we on the Chamberlain's own ground he He has been so kind as to throw op his park.

STEN. We're extremely comforta here, Mr. Lundestad—if only peo would leave us in peace—the crowd mean.

LUN. [*unruffled*]. Very well; th it's all right. [*Goes towards the bac*

ASL. [*entering from the tent*]. T waiter is just coming with the wi [*Sits.*]

MON. A table apart, under spec care of the Committee! And on Independence Day of all others!

STEN. But why on earth do you p up with all this, you good people?

MON. The habit of generations, y see.

ASL. You're new to the district, M Stensgard. If only you knew a lit of the local situation.

A WAITER [*brings champagne*]. W it you that ordered—?

ASL. Yes, certainly; open the bott

THE WAITER [*pouring out the win* It goes to your account, Mr. Monse

MON. The whole thing; don't afraid. [*The* WAITER *goes.*]

MON. [*clinks glasses with* STEN GARD]. Here's welcome among us, M Stensgard! It gives me great pleasu to have made your acquaintance. T newspapers have made us famil with your name, on all sorts of pub occasions. You have great gifts oratory, Mr. Stensgard, and a wa heart for the [illegible] weal. I trust y

ill enter with life and vigour into
ie—h'm, into the—

Asl. The local situation.

Mon. Oh, yes, the local situation. I
ink to that. [*They drink.*]

Sten. Whatever I do, I shall cer-
inly put life and vigour into it.

Mon. Bravo! Hear, hear! Another
ass in honour of that promise.

Sten. No, stop; I've already—

Mon. Oh! nonsense! Another glass,
say—to seal the bond!

[*They clink glasses and drink. Dur-
g what follows* Bastian *keeps on
ling the glasses as soon as they are
npty.*]

Mon. However—since we have got
on the subject—I must tell you that
s not the Chamberlain himself that
eps everything under his thumb. No,
r—old Lundestad is the man that
ands behind and drives the sledge.

Sten. So I am told in many quar-
rs. I can't understand how a Liberal
ke him—

Mon. Lundestad? Do you call An-
rs Lundestad a Liberal? To be sure,
professed Liberalism in his young
ys, when he was still at the foot of
e ladder. And then he inherited his
at in Parliament from his father.
rd! everything runs in families here.

Sten. Isn't there a way to stop it?

Asl. Yes, damn it all, Mr. Stens-
rd—see if you can't put a stop to
em!

Sten. I don't say that I—

Asl. Yes, you! You are just the
n. You have the gift of gab and the
n of a ready writer. My paper's at
ur disposal.

Mon. If anything is to be done, it
st be done quickly. The preliminary
ction comes on in three days now.

Sten. And if you were elected, your private affairs would not prevent your accepting the charge?

Mon. My private affairs would suffer, of course; but if it appeared that the good of the community demanded the sacrifice—

Sten. Good; that's good. And you have a party already: that I can see clearly.

Mon. I flatter myself the majority of the younger, go-ahead generation—

Als. H'm, h'm! 'ware spies!

Daniel Heire *enters from the tent; he peers about short-sightedly, and approaches.*

Heire. May I beg for the loan of a spare seat; I want to sit over there.

Mon. The benches are fastened here, you see; but won't you take a place at this table?

Heire. Here? At this table? Oh, yes, with pleasure. [*Sits.*] Dear, dear! Champagne, I believe.

Mon. Yes; won't you join us in a glass?

Heire. No, thank you! Madam Rundholmen's champagne— Well, well, just half a glass to keep you company. If only one had a glass, now.

Mon. Bastian, go and get one.

Bas. Oh, Aslaksen, go and fetch a glass.

[Aslaksen *goes into the tent. A pause.*]

Heire. Don't let me interrupt you, gentlemen. I wouldn't for the world—! Thanks, Aslaksen. [*Bows to* Stensgard.] Have I the pleasure of addressing our new legal luminary, Mr. Stensgard?

Mon. Quite right. [*Introducing them.*] Mr. Stensgard, Mr. Daniel Heire—

BAS. Capitalist.

HEIRE. Ex-capitalist, you should rather say. It's all gone now; slipped through my fingers, so to speak. Not that I'm bankrupt—

MON. Drink, drink, while the froth is on it.

HEIRE. But rascality, you understand—sharp practice and so forth—I say no more. Well, well, I am confident it is only temporary. When I get my outstanding law-suits and some other little matters off my hands, I shall soon be on the track of our aristocratic old Reynard the Fox. Let us drink to that— You won't eh?

STEN. I should like to know first who your aristocratic old Reynard the Fox may be.

HEIRE. Hee-hee; you needn't look so uncomfortable, man. You don't suppose I'm alluding to Mr. Monsen. No; it's Chamberlain Bratsberg, my dear young friend.

STEN. What! In money matters the Chamberlain is surely above reproach.

HEIRE. You think so, young man? H'm; I say no more. [*Draws nearer.*] Twenty years ago I was worth no end of money. My father left me a great fortune. You've heard of my father, I daresay? No? Old Hans Heire? They called him Gold Hans. He was a shipowner; made heaps of money in the blockade time; had his window-frames and door-posts gilded; he could afford it— I say no more.

ASL. Didn't he gild his chimney-pots, too?

HEIRE. No; that was only a penny-a-liner's lie; invented long before your time, however. But he made the money fly; and so did I in my time. My visit to London, for instance—haven't you heard of my visit to London took a prince's retinue with me. the sums I have lavished on art science! And on bringing rising t to the front!

ASL. [*rises.*] Well, good-bye, tlemen.

MON. What? Are you leaving

ASL. Yes; I want to stretch my a bit. [*Goes.*]

HEIRE [*speaking low*]. He was of them—just as grateful as the hee-hee! Do you know, I kept h whole year at college?

STEN. Indeed? Has Aslaksen to college?

HEIRE. Like young Monsen. made nothing of it; also like—I no more. Had to give him up, see; he had already developed his happy taste for spirits—

MON. But you've forgotten you were going to tell Mr. Stens about the Chamberlain.

HEIRE. Oh, it's a complicated ness. When my father was in glory, things were going downhill the old Chamberlain—this one's fa he was a Chamberlain too.

BAS. Everything runs in fan here.

HEIRE. Including the social grad I say no more. The conversatio the currency, rash speculations, ex agances he launched out into, fo him to sell some of his land.

STEN. And your father bough

HEIRE. Bought and paid fo Well, what then? I come into property; I make improvement the thousand—

BAS. Of course.

HEIRE. Your health, my frien Improvements by the thousand, I

-thinnin_ the woods, and so forth. ears pass; and then comes Master eynard—the present one, I mean— id repudiates the bargain.

Sten. But, my dear Mr. Heire, you uld surely have snapped your fingers him.

Heire. Not so easily! Some small rmalities had been overlooked, he de- ared! Besides, I happened then to in temporary difficulties, which aft- wards became permanent. And what n a man do without capital?

Mon. You're right there, by God! id in many ways you can't do very ich with capital either. That I know my cost. Why, even my innocent ildren—

Bas. [*thumps the table*]. Ugh, ther! if I only had certain people re!

Sten. Your children, you say?

Mon. Yes; take Bastian, for ex- iple. Perhaps I haven't given him good education.

Heire. A threefold education! First the University; then for painting; d then for—it's a civil engineer he now, isn't it?

Bas. Yes, that I am, by the Lord!

Mon. Yes, that he is; I can pro- ce his bills and his certificates to ve it! But who gets the town busi- s? Who has got the local road- king—especially these last two rs? Foreigners, or at any rate angers—in short, people no one ows anything about!

Heire. Yes; it's shameful the way ngs go on. Whenever there's a post confidence going, it's always the ne! Never Monsen—always some that enjoys the confidence—of the ple in power. Well, well; *commune suffragium*, as the Roman Law puts it: that means shipwreck in the Common Council, sir. It's a shame! Your health!

Mon. Thanks! But, to change the subject—how are all your law-suits getting on?

Heire. They are still pending; I can say no more for the present. Next week I shall have to summon the whole Town Council before the Arbitration Commission.

Bas. Is it true that you once summoned yourself before the Arbitration Commission?

Heire. But I didn't put in an appearance.

Mon. Ha, ha! You didn't, eh?

Heire. I had a sufficient excuse: had to cross the river, and it was unfortunately the very year of Bastian's bridge—plump! down it went, you know—

Bas. Why, confound it all—!

Heire. Take it coolly, young man! You are not the first that has bent the bow till it breaks. Everything runs in families, you know— I say no more.

Mon. Ho! ho! ho! You say no more, eh? Well, drink, then, and say no more! [*To* Stensgard.] You see, Mr. Heire's tongue is licensed to wag as it pleases.

Heire. Yes, freedom of speech is the only civic right I really value.

Sten. What a pity the law should restrict it.

Heire. Hee-hee! Our legal friend's mouth is watering for a nice action for slander, eh? Make your mind easy, my dear sir! I'm an old hand, let me tell you!

Sten. Especially at slander?

Heire. Your pardon, young man!

That outburst of indignation does honour to your heart. I beg you to forget an old man's untimely frankness about your absent friends.

STEN. Absent friends?

HEIRE. I have nothing to say against the son, of course—nor against the daughter. And if I happened to cast a passing slur upon the Chamberlain's character—

STEN. The Chamberlain's? Is it the Chamberlain's family you call my friends?

HEIRE. Well, you don't pay visits to your enemies, I presume?

BAS. Visits?

MON. What?

HEIRE. I am letting cats out of bags—!

MON. Have you been paying visits at the Chamberlain's?

STEN. Nonsense! A misunderstanding—

HEIRE. A most unhappy slip on my part. But how was I to know it was a secret? [*To* MONSEN.] Besides, you mustn't take my expressions too literally. When I say a visit, I mean only a sort of formal call.

STEN. I tell you I haven't exchanged a single word with any of that family!

HEIRE. Is it possible? Were you not received the second time either? I know they were "not at home" the first time.

STEN. [*to* MONSEN]. I had a letter to deliver from a friend in Christiania.

HEIRE. [*rising.*] I'll be hanged if it isn't positively revolting! Here is a young man at the outset of his career; full of simple-minded confidence, he seeks out the experienced man-of-the-world and knocks at his door; turns to him, who has brought his ship to port, to beg for— I say no more! The ma of-the-world shuts the door in his fa —I say no more! [*With indignation* Was there ever such shameful ins lence!

STEN. Oh, never mind that stup business.

HEIRE. Not at home! He, who go about professing that he is always home to reputable people!

STEN. Does he say that?

HEIRE. A phrase. He's not at hor to Mr. Monsen either. But I ca think what has made him hate y so much. Yes, hate you, I say; f what do you think I heard yesterda

STEN. I don't want to know.

HEIRE. Then I say no more. E sides, the expressions didn't surpr me—coming from the Chamberlain, mean. Only I can't understand w he should have added "demagogue."

STEN. Demagogue!

HEIRE. Well, since you insist up it, I must confess that the Chamb lain called you an adventurer a demagogue.

STEN. [*jumps up*]. What!

HEIRE. Adventurer and demagog —or demagogue and adventurer; don't know the order.

STEN. And you heard that?

HEIRE. I? If I had been prese Mr. Stensgard, you may be sure should have stood up for you as y deserve.

MON. There, you see what con of—

STEN. How dare the old scoundrel-

HEIRE. Come! Keep your temp Very likely it was a mere figure speech—a harmless little joke, I ha no doubt. You can demand an planation tomorrow; for I suppose y

e going to the great dinner party, ?

STEN. I am going to no dinner-rty.

HEIRE. Two calls and no invita-on—!

STEN. Demagogue and adventurer! hat can he be thinking of?

MON. Look there! Talk of the vil—! Come, Bastian. [*Goes off with* ASTIAN.]

STEN. What did he mean, Mr. eire?

HEIRE. Haven't the ghost of an idea. It pains you? Your hand, young an! Believe me, you have yet many tter lessons to learn in this life. You e young; you are confiding; you are ustful. It is beautiful; it is even uching; but—but—trustfulness is ver, experience is gold: that's a overb of my own invention, sir! God ess you! [*Goes.*]

CHAMBERLAIN BRATSBERG, *his daugh-* THORA, *and* DOCTOR FIELDBO *enter om the left.*

LUN. [*strikes the bell on the ros-um*]. Silence for Mr. Ringdal's eech!

STEN. [*shouts*]. Mr. Lundestad, I mand to be heard.

LUN. Afterwards.

STEN. No, now! at once!

LUN. You can't speak just now. lence for Mr. Ringdal!

RINGDAL [*on the rostrum*]. Ladies d gentlemen! We have at this mo-nt the honour of seeing in our midst e man with the warm heart and the en hand—the man whose door is ver closed to any reputable citizen he man who—who—ladies and gen-nen, our honoured guest is no lover long speeches; so, without more words, I call for three cheers for Chamberlain Bratsberg and his family! Long life to them! Hurrah!

THE CROWD. Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!

[*Great enthusiasm; people press around the* CHAMBERLAIN, *who thanks them and shakes hands with those nearest him.*

STEN. Now may I speak?

LUN. By all means. The platform is at your service.

STEN. [*jumps upon the table*]. I shall choose my own platform.

THE YOUNG MEN [*crowding around him*]. Hurrah!

CHAM. [*to the* DOCTOR]. Who is this obstreperous personage?

FIEL. Mr. Stensgard.

CHAM. Oh, it's he, is it?

STEN. Listen to me, my glad-hearted brothers and sisters! Hear me, all you who have in your souls—though it may not reach your lips—the exultant song of the day of our freedom! I am a stranger among you—

ASL. No!

STEN. Thanks for that "No!" I take it as the utterance of a longing. A stranger I am, however; but this I swear, that I come among you for your sorrows and your joys, your victories and defeats. If it lay in my power—

ASL. It does, it does!

LUN. No interruptions! You have no right to speak.

STEN. You still less! I abolish the Committee! Freedom on the day of freedom, boys!

THE YOUNG MEN. Hurrah for freedom!

STEN. They deny you the right of speech! You hear it—they want to gag you! Away with this tyranny! I

won't stand here declaiming to a flock of dumb animals. I will talk; but you shall talk, too. We will talk to each other, from the heart!

THE CROWD [*with growing enthusiasm.*] Hurrah!

STEN. We will have no more of these barren, white-chokered festivities! A golden harvest of deeds shall hereafter shoot up from each Seventeenth of May. May! It is the season of bud and blossom. On the first of June I shall have been just two months among you; and in that time what greatness and littleness, what beauty and deformity, have I not seen?

CHAM. What on earth is he talking about, Doctor?

FIEL. Aslaksen says it's the local situation.

STEN. I have seen great and brilliant possibilities among the masses; but I have seen, too, a spirit of corruption brooding over the germs of promise. I have seen ardent and trustful youth rush yearning forth—and I have seen the door shut in its face.

THORA. Oh, Heaven!

CHAM. What does he mean by that?

STEN. There hovers in the air an Influence, a Spectre from the dead and rotten past, which spreads darkness and oppression where there should be nothing but buoyancy and light. We must lay that Spectre; down with it!

THE CROWD. Hurrah! Hurrah for the Seventeenth of May!

THORA. Come away, father—!

CHAM. What does he mean by a spectre? Who is he talking about, Doctor?

FIEL. [*quickly*]. Oh, it's about—

[*Whispers a word or two.*]

CHAM. Aha! So that's it!

THORA [*softly to* FIELDBO]. Than

STEN. If no one else will crush dragon, I will! But you must he boys!

MANY VOICES. Yes! yes!

STEN. We are young! The time longs to us; but we also belong to time. Our right is our duty! Lis to me! We must form a League. money-bag has ceased to rule am us!

CHAM. Bravo! [*To the* DOCTO He said the money-bag; so no do you're right—

STEN. Yes, boys; we are the wea of the country, if only there's metal us. Our will is the ringing gold t shall pass from man to man. War the knife against whoever shall d its currency!

THE CROWD. Hurrah!

STEN. A scornful "bravo" has b flung in my teeth—

CHAM. No, no!

STEN. What care I! Thanks threats alike are powerless over perfect will. And now, God be v us! For we are going about His wo with youth and faith to help us. Co then, into the refreshment-tent— League shall be baptised this hour.

THE CROWD. Hurrah! Carry h Shoulder high with him! [*He is li shoulder high.*]

VOICES. Speak on! More! Mo

STEN. Let us hold together, I Providence is on the side of the Lea of Youth. It lies with us to rule world!

[*He is carried into the tent a wild enthusiasm.*]

MADAM [*wiping her eyes*]. Oh, L

ow beautifully he does speak! Don't ou feel as if you could kiss him, Mr. eire?

HEIRE. Thank you, I'd rather not.

MADAM. Oh, you! I daresay not.

HEIRE. Perhaps you would like to ss him, Madam Rundholmen.

MADAM. How horrid you are!

[*She goes into the tent;* HEIRE *fol-ws her.*]

CHAM. Spectre — dragon — money-g! It was horribly rude, but well served!

LUN. [*approaching*]. I'm heartily rry, Chamberlain—

CHAM. Yes, where was your knowl-ge of character, Lundestad? Well, ll; we are none of us infallible. od-night, and thanks for a pleasant ening. [*Turns to* THORA *and the* CTOR.] But bless me, I've been posi-ely rude to that fine young fellow.

FIEL. How so?

THORA. His call, you mean—?

CHAM. Yes. Lundestad told me he s an adventurer and—and I forget at else. Fortunately I can make up r it.

THORA. How?

CHAM. Come, Thora; let us see to at once—

FIEL. Oh, do you think it's worth ile, Chamberlain—?

THORA [*softly*]. Hush!

CHAM. When one has done an in-stice one should lose no time in un-ing it; that's a plain duty. Good-ght, Doctor. After all, I've spent an using hour; and that's more than I ve to thank you for today.

FIEL. Me, Chamberlain?

CHAM. Yes—you and others.

FIEL. May I ask what I—?

CHAM. Don't be curious, Doctor. I am never curious. Come, come—no offence—good-night!

[*The* CHAMBERLAIN *and* THORA *go out to the left;* FIELBO *gazes thoughtfully after them.*]

ASL. [*from the tent*]. Hei, waiter! Pen and ink! Things are getting lively, Doctor!

FIEL. What things?

ASL. He's founding the League.

LUN. [*who has quietly drawn near*]. Are many putting down their names?

ASL. We've enrolled about seven-and-thirty, not counting widows and so forth. Pen and ink, I say. No waiters to be found!—that's the fault of the local situation.

[*Goes off behind the tent.*]

LUN. Puh! It has been hot today.

FIEL. I'm afraid hotter days will come.

LUN. Do you think the Chamberlain was very angry?

FIEL. Oh, not in the least; you could see that, couldn't you? But what do you say to the new League?

LUN. H'm; I say nothing. What is there to be said?

FIEL. It's the beginning of a struggle for power here in the district.

LUN. Well, well; no harm in a fight. He has great gifts, that Stensgard.

FIEL. He is determined to make his way.

LUN. Youth is always determined to make its way. I was, when I was young. But mightn't we look in and see—

HEIRE [*from the tent*]. Well, Mr. Lundestad, are you going to move the previous question, eh? To head the opposition? Hee-hee! You must make haste!

LUN. Oh, I daresay I shall be in time.

HEIRE. Too late, sir! Unless you want to stand god-father. [*Cheering from the tent.*] They're chanting Amen; the baptism is over.

LUN. I suppose one may be permitted to listen; I shall keep quiet. [*Enters the tent.*]

HEIRE. There goes one of the falling trees! The place will soon look like a wood after a tornado. Won't I chuckle over it!

FIEL. Tell me, Mr. Heire, what interest have you in the matter?

HEIRE. Indeed? I am entirely disinterested, Doctor! If I chuckle, it is on behalf of my fellow citizens. There will be life, spirit, go in things. For my own part, I say, as the Grand Turk said of the Emperor of Austria and the King of France—I don't care whether the pig eats the dog or the dog the pig.

[*Goes toward the back on the right.*]

THE CROWD [*in the tent*]. Long live Stensgard! Hurrah for the League of Youth! Wine! Punch! Hei, hei! Beer! Hurrah!

BAS. [*comes from the tent*]. God bless you and every one. [*With tears in his voice.*] Oh, Doctor, I feel so strong this evening; I must do something.

FIEL. What would you like to do?

BAS. I think I'll go down to the dancing-room and fight one or two fellows. [*Goes out behind the tent.*]

STEN. [*comes from the tent without his hat, and greatly excited*]. My dear Fieldbo, is that you?

FIEL. At your service, Tribune of the People! For I suppose you've been elected—?

STEN. Of course; but—

FIEL. And what is to come of all? What nice little post are yo to have? The management of th Bank? Or perhaps—

STEN. Oh, don't talk to me li that! I know you don't mean it. Yo are not so empty and wooden as yo like to appear.

FIEL. Empty and wooden, eh?

STEN. Fieldbo! Be my friend you used to be! We have not unde stood each other of late. You ha wounded and repelled me with yo ridicule and irony. Believe me, was wrong of you. [*Embraces hi* Oh, my great God! how happy I am

FIEL. You too? So am I, so am

STEN. Yes, I should be the meani hound on earth if all heaven's bou didn't make me good and true. H have I deserved it, Fieldbo?

FIEL. There is my hand! This e ning I am your friend indeed!

STEN. Thanks! Be faithful a true, as I shall be!—Oh, isn't it unspeakable joy to carry all that mu tude away and along with you? H can you help becoming good fr mere thankfulness? And how it ma you love all your fellow creatures! feel as if I could clasp them all one embrace, and weep, and beg th forgiveness because God has given more than he has them.

FIEL. [*quietly*]. Yes, treasu without price may fall to one ma lot. This evening I would not cr an insect.

STEN. You?

FIEL. Never mind. That's ap

om the question. I only mean that understand you.

STEN. What a lovely night! Listen the music and merriment floating it over the meadows. And how still is in the valley! I tell you the an whose life is not reconsecrated in ch an hour, does not deserve to live n God's earth!

FIEL. Yes; but tell me now: what you mean to build up of it—to-orrow, and through the working-ays to come?

STEN. To build up? We have to ar down first.—Fieldbo, I had once dream—or did I see it? No; it was dream, but such a vivid one! I ought the Day of Judgment was me upon the world. I could see the hole curve of the hemisphere. There as no sun, only a livid storm-light. tempest arose; it came rushing from e west and swept everything before first withered leaves, then men; t they kept on their feet all the ne, and their garments clung fast to em, so that they seemed to be hur-ed along sitting. At first they looked e townspeople running after their ts in a wind; but when they came arer they were emperors and kings; d it was their crowns and orbs they re chasing and catching at, and emed always on the point of grasp-g, but never grasped. Oh, there re hundreds of them, and none of em understood in the least what s happening; but many bewailed emselves, and asked: "Whence can come, this terrible storm?" Then me the answer: "One Voice spoke, d the storm is the echo of that one ice."

FIEL. When did you dream that?

STEN. Oh, several years ago.

FIEL. There were probably disturbances somewhere in Europe, and you had been reading the newspapers after a heavy supper.

STEN. The same shiver, the same thrill, that then ran down my back, I felt again tonight. Yes. I will be the Voice—

FIEL. Come, my dear Stensgard, pause and reflect. You will be the Voice, you say. Good! But where will you be the Voice? Here in the parish? Or at most here in the country! And who will echo you and raise the storm? Why, people like Monsen and Aslaksen, and that fat-headed genius, Mr. Bastian. And instead of the flying emperors and kings, we shall see old Lundestad rushing about after his lost seat in Parliament. Then what will it all amount to? Just townsfolk in a wind.

STEN. In the beginning, yes. But who knows how far the storm may sweep?

FIEL. Fiddlesticks with you and your storm! And the first thing you go and do, is to turn your weapons precisely against all that is worthy and capable among us—

STEN. That is not true.

FIEL. It is not true! Monsen and the Stonelee gang got hold of you the moment you came here; and if you don't shake him off it will be your ruin. Chamberlain Bratsberg is a man of honour. Do you know why the great Monsen hates him? Why, because—

STEN. Not a word more! I won't hear a word against my friends!

FIEL. Look into yourself, Stensgard! Is Mr. Mons Monsen really your friend?

STEN. Mr. Monsen has most kindly opened his doors to me—

FIEL. To people of the better sort he opens his doors in vain.

STEN. Oh, whom do you call the better sort? A few stuck-up officials! I know all about it. As for me, I have been received at Stonelee with so much appreciation—

FIEL. Appreciation? Yes, unfortunately—there we are at the root of the matter.

STEN. Not at all! I can see with unprejudiced eyes. Mr. Monsen has abilities, he has reading, and a keen sense for public affairs.

FIEL. Abilities? Oh, yes, in a way. Reading, too: he takes in the papers, and has read your speeches and articles. And his sense for public affairs he has, of course, proved by applauding the said articles and speeches.

STEN. Now, Fieldbo, up come the dregs of your nature again. Can you never shake off that polluting habit of thought? Why must you always assume mean or ridiculous motives for everything? Oh, you are not serious! Now you look good and true. Do you know Ragna?

FIEL. Ragna Monsen? Oh, after a fashion—at second hand.

STEN. Yes, I know she is sometimes at the Chamberlain's.

FIEL. In a quiet way, yes. She and Miss Bratsberg are old schoolfellows.

STEN. And what do you think of her?

FIEL. Why, from all I have heard she seems to be a very good girl.

STEN. Oh, you should see her in her home! She thinks of nothing but her two little sisters. And how d votedly she must have nursed h mother! You know the mother wa out of her mind for some years b fore she died.

FIEL. Yes; I was their doctor one time. But surely, you don't mea that—

STEN. Yes, Fieldbo, I love her truly to you I can confess it. Oh, I kno what you are surprised at. You thin it strange that so soon after—of cours you know that I was engaged Christiana?

FIEL. Yes, so I was told.

STEN. The whole thing was a di appointment. I had to break it of it was best for all parties. Oh, ho I suffered in that affair! The tortur the sense of oppression I endured— Now, I am out of it all. That wa my reason for leaving town.

FIEL. And with regard to Ragn Monsen, are you quite sure of you self?

STEN. Yes, I am, indeed.

FIEL. Well, then, in heaven's nam go in and win! It means your life happiness! Oh, there's so much could say to you—

STEN. Really? Has she said an thing? Has she confided in Mi Bratsberg?

FIEL. No; that's not what I mea But how can you, in the midst of yo happiness, go and fuddle yourself these political orgies?

STEN. Why not? Man is a com plex machine—I am, at any rate. B sides, my way to her lies through the very party turmoils.

FIEL. A terribly prosaic way.

STEN. Fieldbo, I am ambitiou you know I am. I must make my w

the world. When I remember that
m thirty, and am still on the first
und of the ladder, I feel my con-
ience gnawing at me.

FIEL. Not with its wisdom teeth.

STEN. It's of no use talking to you.
ou have never felt the spur of am-
tion. You have dawdled and drifted
l your days—first at college, then
road, now here.

FIEL. Perhaps; but it has been de-
htful. And no reaction follows, like
hat you feel when you get down
om the table after—

STEN. Stop that! I can bear any-
ing but that. You are damping my
dour.

FIEL. Oh, come! If your ardour
so easily damped—

STEN. Stop, I say! What right
ve you to break in upon my happi-
ss? Do you think I am not sin-
re?

FIEL. Yes, I am sure you are.

STEN. Well, then, why go and
ake me feel suspicious of myself?
houts and cheers from the tent].
ey are drinking my health. An idea
at can take such hold upon people
by God, it must have truth in it!

THORO BRATSBERG, RAGNA MONSEN,
d MR. HELLE *enter from the left*
d cross, half-way back.

HELLE. Look, Miss Bratsberg;
re is Mr. Stensgard.

THORA. Then I dont go any fur-
r. Good-night, Ragna dear.

HELLE *and* MISS MONSEN. Good-
ht, good-night. [*They go out to the*
ht.]

THORA [*advancing*]. I am Miss
atsberg. I have a letter for you,
m my father.

STEN. For me?

THORA. Yes, here it is. [*Going.*]

FIEL. May I not see you home?

THORA. No, thank you. I can go alone. Good-night. [*Goes out to the left.*]

STEN. [*reading the letter by a Chinese lantern*]. What is this!

FIEL. Well—what has the Chamberlain to say to you?

STEN. [*bursts into loud laughter.*] I must say I didn't expect this!

FIEL. Tell me—?

STEN. Chamberlain Bratsberg is a pitiful creature.

FIEL. You dare to—

STEN. Pitiful! Pitiful. Tell any one you please that I said so. Or rather, say nothing about it— [*Puts the letter in his pocket.*] Don't mention this to any one!

[*The* COMPANY *come out from the tent.*]

MON. Mr. President! Where is Mr. Stensgard?

THE CROWD. There he is! Hurrah!

LUN. Mr. President has forgotten his hat. [*Hands it to him.*]

ASL. Here; have some punch! Here's a whole bowlful!

STEN. Thanks, no more.

MON. And the members of the League will recollect that we meet tomorrow at Stonelee—

STEN. Tomorrow? It wasn't tomorrow, was it—?

MON. Yes, certainly; to draw up the manifesto—

STEN. No, I really can't tomorrow —I shall see about it the day after tomorrow. Well, good-night, gentlemen; hearty thanks all round, and hurrah for the future!

THE CROWD. Hurrah! Let's take him home in triumph!

STEN. Thanks, thanks! But you really mustn't—

ASL. We'll all go with you.

STEN. Very well, come along. Good-night, Fieldbo; you're not coming with us?

FIEL. No; but let me tell you, what you said about Chamberlain Bratsberg—

STEN. Hush, hush! It was an exaggeration—I withdraw it! Well, my friends, if you're coming, come; I'll take the lead.

MON. Your arm, Stensgard!

BAS. A song! Strike up! Something thoroughly patriotic!

THE CROWD. A song! A song! Music!

[*A popular air is played and sung. The procession marches out by the back to the right.*]

FIEL. [*to* LUNDESTAD, *who remains behind*]. A gallant procession.

FIEL. Yes—and with a gallant leader.

FIEL. And where are you going, Mr. Lundestad?

LUN. I? I'm going home to bed.

[*He nods and goes off.* DOCTOR FIELDBO *remains behind alone.*]

ACT II

SCENE: *A garden-room at the Chamberlains, elegantly furnished with a piano, flowers, and rare plants. Entrance door at the back. On the left, a door leading to the dining-room; on the right, several glass doors lead out to the garden.*

ASL. *stands at the entrance door. A* MAID-SERVANT *is carrying some dishes of fruit into the dining room.*

THE MAID. Yes, but I tell you they're still at table; you must cal again.

ASL. I'd rather wait, if I may.

THE MAID. Oh, yes, if you like. Yo can sit there for the present.

[*She goes into the dining-room.* ASL *takes a seat near the door. Pause.* DR FIEL. *enters from the back.*]

FIEL. Ah, good evening, Aslaksen are you here?

THE MAID [*returning*]. You're lat this evening, sir.

FIEL. I was called to see a patien

THE MAID. The Chamberlain an Miss Bratsberg have both been inquir ing about you.

FIEL. Indeed?

THE MAID. Yes. Won't you go in a once sir; or shall I say that—?

FIEL. No, no; never mind. I ca have a snack afterwards: I shall wai here. [*She goes out by the back.*]

THE MAID. Dinner will soon b over.

ASL. [*After a pause*]. How ca you resist such a dinner, Doctor?

FIEL. Why, man it seems to me w get too many good things hereabout rather than too few.

ASL. There I can't agree with yo

FIEL. H'm I suppose you ar waiting for some one.

ASL. Yes, I am.

FIEL. And are things going tole ably at home? Your wife—?

ASL. In bed, as usual; coughin and wasting away.

FIEL. And your second child?

ASL. Oh, he's a cripple for the re of his days; you know that. That's ou luck, you see; what is the use of talkin about it?

FIEL. Let me look at you, Aslakse

ASL. Well; what do you want to
e?

FIEL. You've been drinking today.

ASL. Yes, and yesterday, too.

FIEL. Well, yesterday there was
me excuse for it; but to-day—

ASL. What about your friends in
ere then? Aren't they drinking too?

FIEL. Yes, my dear Aslaksen; but
rcumstances differ so in this world.

ASL. I didn't choose my circum-
ances.

FIEL. No, God chose them for you.

ASL. No, he didn't. Daniel Heire
ose, when he took me from the print-
g house and sent me to college. And
amberlain Bratsberg chose, when he
ined Daniel Heire and sent me back
the printing house.

FIEL. Now you know that's not
ue. The Chamberlain did not ruin
niel Heire; Daniel Heire ruined him-
lf.

ASL. Perhaps! But how dared
aniel Heire ruin himself, in the face
his responsibility towards me? God's
rtly to blame too. Why should he
ve me talent and ability? Well, of
urse, I could have turned them to ac-
unt as a respectable handi-craftsman;
t then comes that tattling old fool—

FIEL. It's base of you to say that.
aniel Heire acted with the best of in-
ntions.

ASL. What good do his "best in-
ntions" do me? You hear them in
ere, clinking glasses and drinking
alths? Well, I, too, have sat at that
ble in my day, dressed in purple and
e linen like the best of them—! That
s just the thing for me, that was—
r me, that had read so much and had
irsted so long to have my share in
the good things of life. Well. Smash, crash! down you go—and my fine fortunes fell to pi, as we printers say.

FIEL. But you were not so badly off; you had your trade to fall back upon.

ASL. That's easily said. After getting out of your class you can't get into it again. They took the ground from under my feet, and shoved me out on the slippery ice.

FIEL. Well, far be it from me to judge you harshly—

ASL. No; you have no right to—What a queer jumble it is! Daniel Heire, and Providence, and the Chamberlain, and Destiny, and Circumstance—and I myself in the middle of it! I've often thought of unravelling it all and writing a book about it; but it's so cursedly entangled that— [*Glances towards the door on the left.*] Ah! They're rising from table.

[*The party, ladies and gentlemen, pass from the dining room into the garden, in lively conversation. Among the guests is* STENSGARD, *with* THORA *on his left arm and* SELMA *on his right.* FIELDBO *and* ASLAKSEN *stand beside the door at the back.*]

STEN. I don't know my way here yet; you must tell me where I am to take you.

SELMA. Out into the air; you must see the garden.

STEN. Oh, that will be delightful.

[*They go out by the foremost glass door on the right.*]

FIEL. Why, by all that's wonderful, there's Stensgard!

ASL. It's him I want to speak to. I've had a fine chase after him—

[DANIEL HEIRE *and* ERIK BRATSBERG *enter from the dining-room.*]

HEIRE. Hee-hee! Excellent sherry.

I've tasted nothing like it since I was in London.

ERIK. Yes, it's good, isn't it? It puts life into you.

HEIRE. Well, well—it's a real pleasure to see one's money so well spent.

ERIK. How so? [*Laughing.*] Oh, yes; I see, I see. [*They go into the garden*].

FIEL. You want to speak to Stensgard, you say?

ASL. Yes.

FIEL. On business?

ASL. Of course; the report of the—

FIEL. Well, then, you must wait out there in the meantime.

ASL. In the passage?

FIEL. In the anteroom. This is scarcely the time or place—but the moment I see Stensgard alone, I'll tell him—

ASL. Very well; I'll bide my time.

[*Goes out by the back.*]

CHAMBERLAIN BRATSBERG, LUNDESTAD, RINGDAL, *and one or two other gentlemen come out of the dining-room.*]

CHAM. [*conversing with* LUNDESTAD]. Violent, you say? Well, perhaps the form wasn't all that could be desired; but there were real gems in the speech, I can assure you.

LUN. Well, if you are satisfied, Chamberlain, I have no right to complain.

CHAM. Why should you? Ah, here's the Doctor! Starving I'll be bound.

FIEL. It doesn't matter, Chamberlain. The servants will attend to me. I feel myself almost at home here you know.

CHAM. Oh, you do, do you? I wouldn't be in too great a hurry.

FIEL. What? Am I taking too great a liberty? You yourself permitted me to—

CHAM. What I permitted, I permitted. Well, well, make yourself at home and forage for something to eat [*Slaps him lightly on the shoulder and turns to* LUNDESTAD.] Now here's one you may call an adventurer and—and the other thing I can't remember.

FIEL. Why, Chamberlain—!

LUN. No, I assure you—

CHAM. No arguments after dinner it's bad for the digestion.

[*Goes with the guests into the garden.*]

LUN. [*to* FIELDBO]. Did you ever see the Chamberlain so strange as he is today?

FIEL. I noticed it yesterday evening.

LUN. He will have it that I called Mr. Stensgard an adventurer and something else of that sort.

FIEL. Excuse me; I must go out and talk to the ladies.

[*Goes out to the right.*]

LUN. [*to* RINGAL, *who is arranging a card table.*] How do you account for Mr. Stensgard's appearance here today?

RIN. He wasn't on the original list.

LUN. An afterthought, then? After his attack on the Chamberlain yesterday—?

RIN. Yes, can you understand it?

LUN. Oh, yes, I suppose I can.

RIN. [*more softly*]. You think the Chamberlain is afraid of him?

LUN. I think he is prudent.

[*They go up to the back conversing and so out into the garden. At the same time* SELMA *and* STENSGARD *enter by the foremost door on the right.*]

SEL. Yes, just look—over the top of the trees you can see the church

wer and all the upper part of the wn.

STEN. So you can; I shouldn't have ought so.

SEL. Isn't it a beautiful view?

STEN. Great heaven, how beautiful all is! And you live here all the summer?

SEL. No, not my husband and I; we me and go. We have a big, showy use in town.

STEN. Perhaps your family live in wn?

SEL. My family? Who are my fam-?

STEN. Oh, I didn't know—

SEL. We fairy princesses have no mily.

STEN. Fairy princesses?

SEL. At most we have a wicked ep-mother—

STEN. A witch, yes! So you are a incess!

SEL. Princess of all the sunken pal-es, whence you hear the soft music midsummer nights. Doctor Fieldbo inks it must be pleasant to be a prin-ss; but I must tell you—

ERIK. [*coming from the garden*]. , at last I find the little lady!

SEL. The little lady is telling Mr. ensgard the story of her life.

ERIK. Oh, indeed. And what part es the husband play in the little dy's story?

SEL. The Prince of course. [*To* ENSGARD]. You know the prince al-ys comes and breaks the spell, and en all ends happily, and the fairy-e is over.

STEN. Oh, it's too short.

SEL. Perhaps—in a way.

ERIK. [*putting his arm around her ist*]. But a new fairy-tale grows out of the old one, and in it the Princess becomes a Queen!

SEL. On the same conditions as real Princesses?

ERIK. What condition?

SEL. They must go into exile—to a foreign kingdom.

ERIK. A cigar, Mr. Stensgard?

STEN. Thank you, not just now.

[DOCTOR FIELBO *and* THORA *enter from the garden.*]

SEL. [*going toward them*]. Is that you, Thora dear? I hope you're not ill?

THORA. I? No.

SEL. Oh, but I'm sure you must be; you seem to be always consulting the doctor of late.

THORA. No, I assure you—

SEL. Nonsense; let me feel your pulse! You are burning. My dear Doctor, don't you think the fever will pass over?

FIEL. Everything has its time.

THORA. Would you rather have me freezing—

SEL. No a medium temperature is the best—ask my husband.

CHAM. [*enters from the garden*]. The whole family gathered in secret conclave? That's not very polite to the guests.

THORA. I am just going, father dear—

CHAM. Aha, it is you the ladies are paying court to Mr. Stensgard!

THORA. [*softly to* FIELBO]. Remain here! [*She goes into the garden.*]

ERIK. [*offers* SELMA *his arm.*] Has Madame any objection—?

SEL. Come! [*They go out to the right.*]

CHAM. [*looking after them*]. It's impossible to get these two separated.

FIEL. It would be sinful to try.

CHAM. Fools that we are! How Providence blesses us in spite of ourselves. [*Calls out.*] Thora, Thora, do look after Selma. Get a shawl for her; she'll catch cold. How short-sighted we mortals are, Doctor! Do you know any cure for that disease?

FIEL. The spectacles of experience; through them you will see more clearly a second time.

CHAM. You don't say so! Thanks for the advice. But since you feel yourself at home here, you must really pay a little attention to our guests.

FIEL. Certainly; come Stensgard, shall we—?

CHAM. Oh, no, no—there's my old friend Heire out there—

FIEL. He feels at home here too.

CHAM. Ha, ha, ha! So he does.

FIEL. Well, we two will join forces, and do our best. [*Goes into the garden.*]

STEN. You were speaking of Daniel Heire, Chamberlain. I must say I was rather surprised to see him here.

CHAM. Were you? Mr. Heire and I are old school and college friends. Besides, we have had a good deal to do with each other in many ways since—

STEN. Yes, Mr. Heire was good enough to give his own account of some of these transactions, yesterday evening.

CHAM. H'm!

STEN. Had it not been for him, I certainly should not have let myself boil over as I did. But he has a vile tongue in his head.

CHAM. My dear young friend—Mr. Heire is my guest; you must not forget that. My house is liberty hall, but my guests must not be discussed to their disadvantage.

STEN. I beg your pardon, I'm sure—!

CHAM. Oh, never mind; you belong to the younger generation, that's not so punctilious. I, at any rate, owe Mr. Heire a great deal.

STEN. Yes, he gave one to understand; but I didn't think—

CHAM. I owe him the best part of our domestic happiness, Mr. Stensgard! I owe him my daughter-in-law. Daniel Heire was kind to her in her childhood. She was a youthful prodigy; she gave concerts when she was only ten years old. I daresay you have heard her spoken of—Selma Sjöblom.

STEN. Sjöblom? Yes, of course; her father was Swedish?

CHAM. Yes, a music-teacher. He came here many years ago. Musicians, you know are seldom millionaires; in short, Mr. Heire has always had an eye for talent; he was struck with the child, and had her sent to Berlin; and then, when her father was dead and Heire's fortunes were on the wane, she returned to Christiania, where she was of course, taken up by the best people. That was how my son happened to fall in with her.

STEN. Then in that way Heire has indeed been an instrument for good—

CHAM. We are all instruments, Mr. Stensgard; you, like the rest of us, an instrument of wrath, I suppose—

STEN. Oh, don't speak of it, Chamberlain. I am utterly ashamed—

CHAM. Ashamed?

STEN. It was most unbecoming—

CHAM. The form was perhaps open to criticism, but the intention was excellent. And now I want to ask you in future, when you are contemplating any move of the sort, just to come t

e and tell me of it openly, and with-
ut reserve. We all want to act for the
est; and it is my duty—

STEN. May I speak frankly to you?

CHAM. Do you think I haven't long
ealized that matters here have in
me ways taken a most undesirable
rn? But what was I to do? In the
te King's time I lived for the most
art in Stockholm. I am old now; and
esides, it is not in my nature to take
e lead in reforms, or to throw myself
ersonally into the turmoil of public
fairs. You, Mr. Stensgard, have every
ualification for them; so let us hold
gether.

STEN. Thanks, Chamberlain; many,
any thanks!

[RINGDAL *and* DANIEL HEIRE *enter*
om the garden.]

RIN. And I tell you it must be a
isunderstanding.

HEIRE. Indeed? I like that! How
ould I misunderstand my own ears?

CHAM. Anything new, Heire?

HEIRE. Only that Anders Lundestad
going over to the Stonlee party.

CHAM. Oh, you're joking!

HEIRE. I beg your pardon, my dear
r; I have it from his own lips. Mr.
ndestad intends on account of failing
alth, to retire from political life; you
n draw your own conclusions from
at.

STEN. He told you so himself?

HEIRE. Of course he did. He made
e momentous announcement to an
e-struck circle down in the garden;
e-hee!

CHAM. Why, my dear Ringdal,
at can be the meaning of this?

HEIRE. Oh, it's not difficult to guess.

CHAM. Indeed it is, though. This
a most important affair for the dis-
trict. Come along, Ringdal; we must find him.

[*He and* RINGDAL *go down the garden.*]

FIEL. [*entering by the furthest back garden-door.*] Has the Chamberlain gone out?

HEIRE. Sh! The sages are deliberating! Lundestad is going to resign.

FIEL. Oh, impossible.

STEN. Can you understand it?

HEIRE. It's the League of Youth that's beginning to work, Mr. Stensgard. Do you know what you should call your League? I'll tell you some other time.

STEN. Do you really think it's our League—?

HEIRE. Not the least doubt of it. So we are to have the pleasure of sending our respected friend Mr. Mons Monsen to Parliament! I wish he were off already;—I'd give him a gift with pleasure—I say no more; hee-hee!

[*Goes to the garden.*]

STEN. Tell me, Fieldbo—how do you explain all this?

FIEL. There are other things still more difficult to explain. How come you to be here.

STEN. Like the rest, by invitation.

FIEL. I hear you were invited yesterday evening—after your speech—

STEN. What then?

FIEL. How could you accept?

STEN. What the deuce was I to do? I couldn't insult these good people.

FIEL. Indeed! You couldn't? What about your speech then!

STEN. Nonsense! It was principles I attacked in my speech and not persons.

FIEL. And how do you account for Chamberlain's invitation?

STEN. Why, my dear friend, there

can be only one way of accounting for it.

FIEL. Namely, that the Chamberlain is afraid of you?

STEN. By heaven, he shall have no reason to be! He is a gentleman.

FIEL. That he is.

STEN. Isn't it touching the way he has taken this. And how lovely Miss Bratsberg looked when she brought me the letter!

FIEL. But look here—they haven't mentioned the scene of yesterday, have they?

STEN. They have far too much tact for that. But I am filled with remorse; I must find an opportunity of apologising—

FIEL. I strongly advise you not to! You don't know the Chamberlain—

STEN. Very well, then; my acts shall speak for me.

FIEL. You will not break with the Stonlee party?

STEN. I shall bring about a reconciliation. I have my League; it's a power already.

FIEL. By-the-bye, while I remember —we were speaking of Miss Monsen— I advised you to go in and win—

STEN. Oh, there's no hurry—

FIEL. But I have been thinking it over; you had better put that out of your head.

STEN. I believe you are right. If you marry into an underbred family, you marry the whole tribe of them.

FIEL. Yes, and there are other reasons—

STEN. Monsen is an underbred fellow; I see that now.

FIEL. Well, polish is not his strong point.

STEN. No, indeed it's not! He goes and speaks ill of his guests; that' ungentlemanly. His rooms all reek o stale tobacco—

FIEL. My dear fellow, how is it yo never noticed the stale tobacco before

STEN. It's the contrast that does it I made a false start when I settle here. I fell into the clutches of a clique and they bewildered me with thei clamour. But there shall be an en to that! I won't go and wear my lif out as a tool in their hands.

FIEL. But what will you do wit your League?

STEN. The League shall remain a it is. Its purpose is to counteract nox ious influences; and I am just begin ning to realize what side the noxiou influences come from.

FIEL. But do you think the "Youth will see it in the same light?

STEN. They shall! Fellows like tha should bow before my superior insight

FIEL. But if they won't?

STEN. Then they can go their ow way. You don't suppose I am going t let my life slip into a wrong groov and never reach the goal, for the sak of mere blind consistency?

FIEL. What do you call the goal?

STEN. A career that gives scope fo my talents, and fulfills my aspiration

FIEL. No vague phrases! What d you mean by your goal?

STEN. Well, to you I can make clean breast of it. My goal is this; i the course of time to get into Parli ment, perhaps into the Ministry, and t marry happily into a family of mea and position.

FIEL. And by the help of th Chamberlain's social connections yo intend to—?

STEN. I intend to reach the go

y my own exertions! I must and will ach it; and without help from anyne. It will take time but never mind! leanwhile I shall enjoy life here, rinking in beauty and sunshine—

FIEL. Here?

STEN. Yes, here! Here there are ne manners; life moves gracefully re; the very floors seem laid to be odden only by lacquered shoes. Here e arm chairs are deep and the ladies nk exquisitely into them. Here conrsation moves lightly and elegantly, ke a game at battledore; here no unders come plumping in to make awkward silence. Oh, Fieldbo— here feel for the first time what distincon means! Yes, we have indeed an istocracy of our own; a little circle; aristocracy of culture; and to it I ll belong. Don't you yourself feel the fining influence of this place? Don't u feel that wealth here loses its grossss? When I think of Monsen's money seem to see piles of fetid bank-notes d greasy mortages—but here! here is shimmering silver! And the people e the same. Look at the Chamberlain what a fine high-bred old fellow!

FIEL. He is, indeed.

STEN. And the son—alert, straight rward capable!

FIEL. Certainly.

STEN. And then the daughter-in-y! Isn't she a pearl? Good God, what rich, what a fascinating nature!

FIEL. Miss Bratsberg has that too.

STEN. But she is less remarkable.

FIEL. Oh, you don't know her—how ep, and steadfast, and true her nare is.

STEN. But, oh, the daughter-in-law! frank, almost reckless; and yet so preciative, so irresistible—

FIEL. Why, I really believe you're in love with her.

STEN. With a married woman? Are you crazy? What good would that do me? No, but I am falling in love—I can feel that plainly. Yes, she is indeed deep, and steadfast, and true.

FIEL. Who?

STEN. Miss Bratsberg, of course.

FIEL. What? You're not thinking?

STEN. Yes, by heaven I am!

FIEL. It's quite out of the question.

STEN. Ho-ho! Will rules the world, my dear fellow! We shall see if it doesn't.

FIEL. Why, this is the merest extravagance! Yesterday it was Miss Monsen—

STEN. Oh, I was too hasty about that; besides, you yourself advised me not to—

FIEL. I advise you most emphatically to dismiss all thought of either of them.

STEN. Indeed! Perhaps you think of throwing the handkerchief to one of them?

FIEL I? No, I assure you—

STEN. Well, it wouldn't have mattered if you had. If people stand in my way and balk me of my future, why I stick at nothing.

FIEL. Take care I don't say the same!

STEN. You! What right have you to pose as guardian and protector to Chamberlain Bratsberg's family?

FIEL. I have at least the right of a friend.

STEN. Pooh! that sort of talk won't do with me. Your motive is mere self-interest! It gratifies your petty vanity to imagine yourself cock-of-the-walk in this house; and so I am to be kept

outside the pale.

FIEL. That is the best thing that could happen to you. Here you are standing on hollow ground.

STEN. Am I indeed? Many thanks. I shall manage to prop it up.

FIEL. Try; but I warn you, it will fall through with you first.

STEN. Ho-ho! So you are intriguing against me, are you? I know you now; you are my enemy, the only one I have here.

FIEL. Indeed I am not.

STEN. Indeed you are! You have always been so, ever since our school-days. Just look around here and see how everyone appreciates me, stranger as I am. You, on the other hand, you who know me have never appreciated me. That is the radical weakness of your character—you can never appreciate any one. What did you do in Christiania but go about from tea-party to tea-party, spreading yourself out in little witticisms? That sort of thing brings its own punishment! You dull your sense for all that makes life worth living; and presently you get left behind, fit for nothing.

FIEL. Am I fit for nothing?

STEN. Have you ever been fit to appreciate me?

FIEL. What was I to appreciate in you?

STEN. My will, if nothing else. Every one else appreciates it—the crowd at the fête—Chamberlain Bratsberg and his family—

FIEL. Mr. Mons Monsen and his ditto—! And by-the-bye, that reminds me—there's some one out here waiting for you—

STEN. Who?

FIEL. [*going towards the back*]. One who appreciates you. [*Opens the door and calls.*] Aslaksen, come in!

ASL. [*entering*]. Ah, at last!

FIEL. Good-bye for the present; I won't intrude upon friends in council.

[*Goes into the garden.*]

STEN. What in the devil's name do you want here?

ASL. I must speak to you. You promised me yesterday on account of the founding of the League, and—

STEN. I can't give it to you now.

ASL. Impossible, Mr. Stensgard; the paper appears to-morrow morning.

STEN. Nonsense! It has all to be altered. The matter has entered a new phase; new forces have come into play. What I said about Chamberlain Bratsberg must be entirely recast before it can appear.

ASL. Oh, that about the Chamberlain, that's in type already.

STEN. Then it must come out again.

ASL. Not to go in?

STEN. I won't have it published in that form. Why stare at me? Do you think I don't know how to manage the affairs of the League?

ASL. Oh, certainly; but you must let me tell you—

STEN. Not arguing Aslaksen; that I can't stand and won't stand!

ASL. Do you know, Mr. Stensgard, that you are doing your best to take the bread out of my mouth? Do you know that?

STEN. No; I know nothing of the sort.

ASL. But you are. Last winter, before you came, my paper was looking up. I edited it myself, and I edited it on a principle.

STEN. You?

ASL. Yes, I!—I said to myself; it'

ıe great public that supports paper; ow the great public is the bad public -that comes of the local situation; and ıe bad public will have a bad paper. o you see I edited it—

STEN. Badly! Yes, that's undeni-ble.

ASL. And I prospered by it. But ıen you came and brought ideas into ıe district. The paper took on a col-ır, and then Lundestad's supporters l fell away. The subscribers that are ft won't pay their subscriptions—

STEN. Ah, but the paper has be-ome a good one.

ASL. I can't live on a good paper. ou were to make things lively; you ere to grapple with abuses, as you romised yesterday. The bigwigs were be pilloried; the paper was to be led with things people were bound read—and now, you leave me in the rch—

STEN. Ho-ho! You think I am oing to keep you supplied with libels!

ASL. Mr. Stensgard, you mustn't ive me to desperation, or you'll re-nt it.

STEN. What do you mean?

ASL. I mean that I must make the per pay in another way. Before you me I made an honest living out of cidents and suicides and other harm-s things, that often hadn't even hap-ned. But now you have turned every ing topsy-turvey; people now want ry different fare—

STEN. Just let me tell you this; if u break loose in any way, if you go ingle step beyond my orders, and try exploit the movement in your own ty interests, I'll go to the opposition nter and start a new paper. We can bring your rag to a ruin in a fort-night.

ASL. [*Pale*]. You wouldn't do that!

STEN. Yes, I would; and I can edit a paper so as to appeal to the great public.

ASL. Then I'll go this instant to Chamberlain Bratsberg—

STEN. What have you to do with him?

ASL. What have you to do with him? Do you think I don't know why you are invited here? It's because he is afraid of you, and of what you may do; and you are making capital of that. But if he's afraid of what you may do, he'll be no less afraid of what I may print; and I will make capital of that!

STEN. Would you dare to? A wretched creature like your—!

ASL. I'll soon show you. If your speech is to be kept out of the paper, the Chamberlain shall pay me for keeping it out.

STEN. Try it; just try it! You're drunk, fellow—!

ASL. Only in moderation. But I'll fight if you try to take my poor crust out of my mouth. Little you know what sort of a home mine is; a bedridden wife, a crippled child—

STEN. Off with you! Do you think I want to be soiled with your squalor? What are your bedridden wives and deformed brats to me? If you stand in my way you shall be on the parish before the year's out.

ASL. I'll wait one day—

STEN. Ah, you're coming to your senses.

ASL. I shall announce to the subscribers in a handbill that in consequence of an indisposition contracted at the fête the editor—

STEN. Yes, do so; I daresay, later on, we shall come to an understanding.

ASL. I trust we may—Remember this Mr. Stensgard: that paper is my one ewe lamb. [*Goes out by the back.*]

LUN. [*at the foremost garden door.*] Ah, Mr. Stensgard!

STEN. Ah, Mr. Lundestad!

LUN. You here alone? I should like to have a little talk with you.

STEN. With pleasure.

LUN. Let me say that if any one has told you that I have said anything to your disadvantage, you musn't believe it.

STEN. To my disadvantage? What do you mean?

LUN. Oh, nothing. You see, there are so many busybodies here, that go about doing nothing but setting people by the ears.

STEN. Well, on the whole—I'm afraid our relations are a little strained.

LUN. They are quite natural relations, Mr. Stensgard: the relation of the old to the new; it is always so.

STEN. Oh, come, Mr. Lundestad, you are not so old as all that.

LUN. I have held my seat ever since 1839. It's time I should be relieved.

STEN. Relieved?

LUN. Times change, you see. New problems arise, and for their solution we want new forces.

STEN. Now, frankly, Mr. Lundestad— are you really going to give up your seat to Monsen?

LUN. No, certainly not to Monsen.

STEN. Then I don't understand—

LUN. Suppose, now, I did retire in Monsen's favour: do you think he would be elected?

STEN. It's hard to say. As the preliminary election comes on the day after to-morrow there may scarcely be time to prepare the public mind; but—

LUN. I don't believe he would manage it. The Chamberlain's party, my party, would not vote for him. Of course "my party" is a figure of speech; I mean the men of property, the old families, who are settled on their own land and belong to it. They won't have anything to do with Monsen. Monsen is a newcomer; no one really knows anything about Monsen and his affairs. And then he has had to cut down so much to clear a place for himself— to fell both trees and men, you may say.

STEN. Well, then, if you think he has no chance—

LUN. H'm! You are a man of rare gifts, Mr. Stensgard. Providence has dealt lavishly with you. But it ought to have given you one thing more.

STEN. And what might that be?

LUN. Tell me—why do you never think of yourself? Why have you no ambition?

STEN. Ambition? I?

LUN. In one word—why not go into Parliament yourself?

STEN. I? You are not serious?

LUN. Why not? You have qualified, I hear. And if you don't seize this opportunity, then some one else will come in; and it may not be so easy to unseat him.

STEN. Great heavens, Mr. Lundestad! do you really mean what you say?

LUN. Oh, I don't want to commit you; if you don't care about it—

STEN. Not care about it! Well, I must confess I'm not so utterly devoid of ambition as you suppose. But do you really think it possible?

LUN. Oh, there's nothing impossible about it. I should do my best, and so, no doubt, would the Chamberlain; he knows your oratorical gifts. You have the young men on your side—

STEN. Mr. Lundestad, by heaven, you are my true friend!

LUN. Oh, you don't mean much by that. If you really looked upon me as a friend, you would relieve me of this burden.

STEN. I place myself entirely at your disposal; I will not fail you.

LUN. Then you are really not disinclined to—

STEN. Here's my hand on it!

LUN. Thanks! Believe me, Mr. Stensgard, you will not regret it. But now we must go warily to work. We must both of us take care to be on the electoral college—I to propose you as my successor, and put you through your facings before the rest—

STEN. If we once get so far, we are safe. In the electoral college you are omnipotent.

LUN. There is a limit to omnipotence. You must of course bring your oratory into play; you must take care to explain away anything that might seem objectionable—

STEN. You don't mean that I am to break with my party?

LUN. Now just look at the thing reasonably. We have on the one hand certain men or families who are in possession of the common civic advantages—I mean property, independence, and power. That is the party I belong to. On the other hand, we have the mass of our younger fellow citizens who want to share in these advantages. That is your party. But that party you will quite naturally and properly pass out of when you get into power—to say nothing of taking up a solid position as a man of property—for, of course that is essential, Mr. Stensgard.

STEN. Yes, I believe it is. But the time is short; and such a position is not to be attained in a day.

LUN. That's true; but perhaps the prospect of such a position would be enough—

STEN. The prospect—?

LUN. Have you any objection to a good marriage, Mr. Stensgard. There are heiresses in the country-side. A man like you with a future before him—a man who can reckon on attaining the highest offices—you needn't fear a repulse if you play your cards neatly.

STEN. Then, for heaven's sake, help me in the game! You open wide vistas to me! All that I have hoped and longed for, and that seemed so dreamlike and far away, stands suddenly before me in living reality—to lead the people towards emancipation, to—

LUN. Yes, we must keep our eyes open. I see your ambition is already on the alert. That's well. The rest will come of itself. I shall never forget your readiness to take the burden of office from my shoulders.

[*The whole party gradually enters from the garden. Two maid-servants bring in candles and hand round refreshments during the following scene.*]

SEL. [*goes towards the piano at the back, left*]. Mr. Stensgard, you must join us; we are going to have a game of forfeits.

[*Follows her towards the back, makes arrangements with her, places chairs, etc., etc.*]

STEN. With pleasure; I am just in the mood.

ERIK. [*in an undertone*]. What the deuce is this my father is saying, Mr. Heire? What speech has Mr. Stensgard been making?

HEIRE. Hee-hee! Don't you know about it?

ERIK. No; we townspeople had our dinner and ball at the Club. My father declares Mr. Stensgard has broken with the Stonelee gang—that he was frightfully rude to Monsen—

HEIRE. To Monsen! No, you must have misunderstood him, my dear sir.

ERIK. Well, there were a whole lot of people about; but I certainly heard —

HEIRE. Wait till to-morrow—I say no more. You'll have the whole story with your coffee, in Aslaksen's paper. [*They separate.*]

CHAM. Well, my dear Lundestad, are you sticking to those crotchets of yours?

LUN. They are no crotchets, Chamberlain; rather than be ousted, one should give way gracefully.

CHAM. Nonsense; who is dreaming of ousting you?

LUN. H'm; I'm an old weather-prophet. There has been a change in the wind. Besides, I have my successor ready. Mr. Stensgard—

CHAM. Mr. Stensgard?

LUN. Wasn't that what you meant? I took it for a hint when you said he was a man we must make friends with and support.

CHAM. I meant in his onslaught upon the corruption that goes on at Stonelee.

LUN. But how could you count so confidently upon his breaking with that crew?

CHAM. He did it openly enough last evening, my dear fellow.

LUN. Last evening?

CHAM. Yes, when he spoke of Monsen's deplorable influence in the district.

LUN. [*open-mouthed*]. Of Monsen's—?

CHAM. Of course; that time on the table—

LUN. On the table? Yes?

CHAM. He was frightfully rude. Ha! ha! it was great sport to hear him.

LUN. Great sport, was it?

CHAM. Yes, I own I'm not sorry to see these people a little roughly handled. But now we must back him up; for after such a savage attack—

LUN. As that of yesterday, you mean?

CHAM. Of course.

LUN. Upon the table?

CHAM. Yes, upon the table.

LUN. Against Monsen?

CHAM. Yes, against Monsen and his set. Of course they'll try to have their revenge; you can't blame them—

LUN. [*decidedly*]. Mr. Stensgard must be supported—that is clear.

THORA. Father, you must join in the game.

CHAM. Oh, nonsense child—

THORA. Yes, you must; Selma insists upon it.

CHAM. Very well, I suppose I must give in. [*In an undertone as they go towards the back.*] I'm quite distressed about Lundestad; he is really failing; fancy he didn't in the least understand what Stensgard—

THORA. Oh, come; they've begun the game.

[*She drags him into the circle of*

young people where the game is in full swing].

ERIK. [*calls from his place*], Mr. Heire, you are appointed forfeit-judge.

HEIRE. Hee-hee! It's my first appointment.

STEN. [*also in the circle*]. On account of your legal experience, Mr. Heire.

HEIRE. Oh, my amiable young friend, I should be delighted to sentence you all—I say no more!

STEN. [*slips up to* LUNDESTAD, *who stands in front on the left.*] You were speaking to the Chamberlain. What about? Was it about me?

LUN. Unfortunately it was—about that affair of yesterday evening—

STEN. [*writhing*]. Oh, confound it all!

LUN. He said you had been frightfully rude.

STEN. Do you think it isn't a torture to me?

LUN. Now is your chance to atone for it.

ERIK. [*calls*]. Mr. Stensgard, it's your turn.

STEN. Coming. [*Quickly to* LUNDESTAD.] What do you mean?

LUN. Find an opportunity and apologise to the Chamberlain.

STEN. By heaven, I will!

SEL. Make haste, make haste!

STEN. I'm coming! Here I am!

[*The game goes on with noise and laughter. Some elderly gentlemen play cards on the right.* LUNDESTAD *takes a seat on the left;* DANIEL HEIRE *near him*].

HEIRE. That whelp twits me with my legal experience, does he?

LUN. He's rather free with his tongue that's certain.

HEIRE. And so the whole family goes and fawns upon him. Hee-hee! They're pitifully afraid of him.

LUN. No, there you are wrong, Mr. Heire; the Chamberlain is not afraid of him.

HEIRE. Not afraid? Do you think I'm blind, my good sir?

LUN. No, but—I can trust you to keep the secret? The Chamberlain thinks it was Monsen he was attacking.

HEIRE. Monsen? Oh, absurd!

LUN. Fact, Mr. Heire! Someone must have got him persuaded that—

HEIRE. And so he goes and asks him to a state dinner-party! Deuce take me, if that isn't the best thing I've heard for long.

LUN. Sh, sh! Remember your promise. The Chamberlain's your old school fellow; and even if he has been hard upon you—

HEIRE. Hee-hee! I'll pay him back with interest!

LUN. Take care! He is powerful. Don't play tricks in the lion's den!

HEIRE. Bratsberg a lion? Pooh, he's a block head, sir, and I am not. Oh, won't I get a rare crop of taunts, and jibes, and innuendoes out of this, when once our great suit comes on!

SEL. [*calls from the circle*]. Learned judge, what shall the owner of this forfeit do?

ERIK. [*unnoticed, to* HEIRE]. It's Stensgard's! Think of something amusing.

HEIRE. That forfeit? Hee-hee, let me see; he might—yes, he shall make a speech.

SEL. It's Mr. Stensgard's forfeit.

ERIK. Mr. Stensgard is to make a speech.

STEN. Oh, no, spare me that; I came off badly enough last night.

CHAM. Excellently, Mr. Stensgard; I know something of public speaking.

LUN. [*to* HEIRE]. If only he doesn't put his foot in it now.

HEIRE. Put his foot in it? Hee-hee! You're a sharp one! That's an inspiration! [*In an undertone to* STENSGARD.] If you came off badly last night, why not put yourself right again to-night?

STEN. [*siezed with a sudden idea*]. Lundestad, here is the opportunity!

LUN. [*evasively*]. Play your cards neatly.

[*Looks for his hat and slips quietly towards the door*].

STEN. Yes, I will make a speech!

THE YOUNG LADIES. Bravo! Bravo!

STEN. Fill your glasses, ladies and gentlemen! I am going to make a speech which shall begin with a fable; for here I seem to breathe the finer air of fable-land.

ERIK. [*to the* LADIES]. Hush! Listen!

[*The* CHAMBERLAIN *takes his glass from the card table on the right, beside which he remains standing.* RINGDAL, FIELDBO, *and one or two other gentlemen come in from the garden*].

STEN. It was in the spring time. There came a young cuckoo flying over the uplands. Now the cuckoo is an adventurer. There was a great Bird-Parliament on the meadow beneath him, and both wild and tame fowl flocked to it. They came tripping out of the hen-yards; they waddled up from the goose ponds; down from Stonlee hulked a fat capercailzie, flying low and noisily; he settled down, and ruffled his feathers and flapped his wings, and made himself even broader than he was; and every now and then he crowed, "Krak, krak, krak!" as much as to say; I'm the game-cock from Stonlee, I am!

CHAM. Capital! Hear, hear!

STEN. And then there was an old wood-pecker. He bustled up and down the tree trunks, pecking with his pointed beak, and gorging himself with grubs and everything that turns to gall. To right and left you heard him going; prik, prik, prik!

ERIK. Excuse me, wasn't it a stork, or a—?

HEIRE. Say no more!

STEN. That was the old woodpecker. But now there came life into the crew; for they found something to cackle evil about. And they flustered together until at last the young cuckoo began to join in the cackling—

FIEL. [*unnoticed*]. For God's sake, man, be quite!

STEN. Now it was an eagle they cackled about—an eagle who dwelt in lonely dignity upon a beetling cliff. They were all agreed about him. "He's a bugbear to the neighborhood," croaked a hoarse raven. But the eagle swooped down into their midst, siezed the cuckoo, and bore him aloft to his eyrie.— Heart conquered heart! From that clear summit the adventurer-cuckoo looked far and wide over the lowlands; there he found sunshine and peace; and there he learned to judge aright the swarm from the hen-yards and the clearings—

FIEL. [*loudly*]. Bravo, Bravo! And now some music.

CHAM. Hush! Don't interrupt him.

STEN. Chamberlain Bratsberg I stand before you, in the presence of everyone, to beg your forgiveness for last night.

CHAM. [*falls a step backwards*].

Mine—?

STEN. I thank you for the magnanimous vengeance you have taken for my senseless words. In me you have henceforth a faithful champion. And now ladies and gentlemen, I drink the health of the eagle on the mountain-top—the health of Chamberlain Bratsberg.

CHAM. [*clutching at the table*]. Thank you, Mr.—Mr. Stensgard.

THE GUESTS [*for the most part in painful embarrassment*]. The Chamberlain! Chamberlain Bratsberg!

CHAM. Ladies and Gentlemen! [*softly.*] Thora!

THORA. Father!

CHAM. Oh, Doctor, Doctor, what have you done—?

STEN. [*with his glass in his hand, radiant with self-satisfaction.*] Now to our places again! Hullo, Fieldbo! Come, in the League of Youth! The game's going merrily!

HEIRE. [*in front, on the left*]. Yes, on my soul, the game's going merrily!

[LUNDESTAD *slips out by the door in the back.*]

ACT III

SCENE—*An elegant morning-room with entrance door in the back. On the left, the door of the* CHAMBERLAIN'S *study; further back, a door leading to the drawing-room. On the right, a door leading to* RINGDAL'S *offices; further forward, a window.*

[THORA *is seated on the sofa, left, sewing. The* CHAMBERLAIN *paces angrily up and down.*]

CHAM. Yes, now we have the epilogue—tears and lamentations—

THORA. Oh, that we had never seen that man!

CHAM. What man?

THORA. That wretched Mr. Stensgard, of course.

CHAM. You should rather say: Oh, that we had never seen that wretched Doctor.

THORA. Doctor Fieldbo?

CHAM. Yes, Fieldbo, Fieldbo! Wasn't it he that palmed off a parcel of lies upon me—?

THORA. No, my dear father, it was I.

CHAM. You? Well, then, both of you! You were his accomplice—behind my back. A nice state of affairs!

THORA. Oh, father, if you only knew—

CHAM. Oh, I know enough; more than enough; much more!

[DR. FILEDBO *enters from the back.*]

FIEL. Good morning, Chamberlain! Good morning, Miss Bratsberg!

CHAM. [*still pacing the room*]. So you are there, are you—bird of evil omen!

FIEL. Yes, it was an unpleasant affair.

CHAM. [*looking out at the window*]. Oh, you think so?

FIEL. You must have noticed how I kept my eye upon Stensgard all the evening. When I heard there was to be a game of forfeits, I thought there was no danger—

CHAM. [*stamping on the floor*]. To be made a laughing-stock by such a windbag! What must my guests have thought of me? That I was mean enough to want to buy this—this—as Lundestad calls him!

FIEL. Yes, but—

THORA. [*unnoticed by her father*]. Don't speak.

CHAM. [*after a short pause turns to* FIELDBO]. Tell me frankly, Doctor:

—Am I really denser than the general run of people?

FIEL. How can you ask such a question?

CHAM. Then how did it happen that I was probably the only person there who didn't understand that that confounded speech was meant for me?

FIEL. Shall I tell you why?

CHAM. Certainly.

FIEL. It is because you regard your position in the district differently from other people.

CHAM. I regard my position as my father before me regarded his. No one would ever have ventured to treat him so.

FIEL. Your father died about 1830.

CHAM. Oh, yes, many a barrier has broken down since that time. But, after all, it's my own fault. I have mixed myself up too much with these good people. So now I must be content to have my name coupled with Anders Lundestad's!

FIEL. Frankly, I see no disgrace in that.

CHAM. Oh, you know quite well what I mean. Of course I don't plume myself on rank, on titles, or anything of that sort. But what I hold in honour, and expect others to hold in honour, is the integrity handed down in our family from generation to generation. What I mean is that when a man like Lundestad goes into public life, he cannot keep his character and his conduct entirely free from stain. But they might leave me in peace; I stand outside their parties.

FIEL. Not so entirely, Chamberlain; at least you were delighted so long as you thought it was Monsen that was attacked.

CHAM. Don't mention that fellow!—It is he that has relaxed the moral sense of the district. And now he has gone and turned my son's head, confound him!

THORA. Erik's?

FIEL. Your son's?

CHAM. Yes; what led him to go and set up in business? It leads to nothing.

FIEL. Why, my dear Chamberlain, he must live and—

CHAM. Oh, with economy he could quite well live on the money that came to him from his mother.

FIEL. He might perhaps live on it, but what could he live for?

CHAM. For? Well, if he absolutely must have something to live for, hasn't he qualified as a lawyer? He might live for his profession.

FIEL. No, that he couldn't do; it is against his nature. Then there was no official appointment he could well hope for; you have kept the management of your property in your own hands; and your son has no children to educate. Therefore, when he sees tempting examples around him—people who have started from nothing and are worth their half million—

CHAM. Their half million! Oh, come now, let us keep to the hundred thousands. But neither the half million nor the hundred thousands can be scraped together with perfectly clean hands:—I don't mean in the eyes of the world; Heaven knows it is easy enough to keep within the law; but in respect to one's own conscience. Of course my son cannot descend to anything questionable so you may be quite sure Mr. Erik Bratsberg's financial operations won't bring in any half millions.

[SELMA, *in walking dress, enters from the back.*]

SEL. Good-morning! Is Erik not here?

CHAM. Good-morning child! Are you looking for your husband?

SEL. Yes, he said he was coming here. Mr. Monsen called upon him early this morning, and then—

CHAM. Monsen? Does Monsen come to your house?

SEL. Now and then; generally on business. Why, my dear Thora, what's the matter?

THORA. Oh, it's not nothing.

SEL. No, it's not nothing! At home Erik was out of humour, and here—I can see it in your looks; something is wrong. What is it?

CHAM. Nothing you need trouble about, at any rate. You are too dainty to carry burdens, my little Selma. Go into the drawing-room for the present. If Erik said he was coming, he will be here soon, no doubt.

SEL. Come, Thora—and be sure you don't let me sit in a draught. [*Embracing her.*] Oh, I could hug the life out of you, my sweet Thora!

[*The two ladies go off to the left.*]

CHAM. So they are hand in glove, are they, the two speculators! They would go into partnership. Monsen and Stratsberg—how nice it would sound!

[*A knock at the door in the back.*] Come in!

[STENSGARD *enters.*]

CHAM. [*recoiling a step.*] What is this?

STEN. Yes, here I am again, Chamberlain!

CHAM. So I see.

FIEL. Are you mad, Stensgard?

STEN. You retired early yesterday evening. When Fieldbo had explained to me how matters stood, you had already—

CHAM. Excuse me—all explanations are superfluous—

STEN. I understand that; therefore I have not come to make any.

CHAM. Oh, indeed?

STEN. I know I have insulted you.

CHAM. I know that too; and before I have you turned out, perhaps you will be good enough to tell me why you are here.

STEN. Because I love your daughter.

FIEL. What—!

CHAM. What does he say, Doctor?

STEN. Ah, you can't grasp the idea, Chamberlain. You are an old man; you have nothing to fight for—

CHAM. And you presume to—?

STEN. I am here to ask for your daughter's hand, Chamberlain.

CHAM. You—you—? Won't you sit down?

STEN. Thanks, I prefer to stand.

CHAM. What do you say to this, Doctor?

STEN. Oh, Fieldbo is on my side; he is my friend; the only true friend I have.

FIEL. No, no, man! Never in this world if you—

CHAM. Perhaps it was with this view that Doctor Fieldbo secured his friend's introduction into my house?

STEN. You know me only by my exploits of yesterday and the day before. That is not enough. Besides I am not the same man to-day that I was then. My intercourse with you and yours has fallen like a spring shower upon my spirit, making it put forth new blossoms in a single night! You must not hurl me back into my sordid past. Till

now, I have never been at home with the beautiful in life; it has always been beyond my reach—

CHAM. But my daughter—?

STEN. Oh, I shall win her.

CHAM. Indeed? H'm!

STEN. Yes, for I have will on my side. Remember what you told me yesterday. You were opposed to your son's marriage—and see how it has turned out! You must put on the glasses of experience, as Fieldbo said—

CHAM. Ah! that was what you meant?

FIEL. Not in the least! My dear Chamberlain, let me speak to him alone—

STEN. Nonsense; I have nothing to speak to you about. Now, pray be reasonable, Chamberlain! A family like your needs new alliances, or it's brains stagnate—

CHAM. Oh, this is too much!

STEN. Now, now, don't be angry! These high-and-mighty airs are unworthy of you—of course you know they are all nonsense at bottom. You'll value me when you come to know me. Yes, yes; you shall value me—both you and your daughter! I will make her—

CHAM. What do you think of this, Doctor?

FIEL. I think it's madness.

STEN. Yes, it would be in you; but I, you see—I have a mission to fulfill on God's beautiful earth.

CHAM. Mr. Stensgard, there is the door.

STEN. You show me—?

CHAM. The door!

STEN. Don't do that!

CHAM. Out with you! You are an adventurer, an a—a—confound my memory! You're a—

STEN. What am I?

CHAM. You are—that other thing—it's on the tip of my tongue—

STEN. Beware how you block my career.

CHAM. Beware? Of what?

STEN. I will attack you in the papers, persecute you, libel you, do all I can to undermine your reputation. You shall shriek under the lash. You shall seem to see spirits in the air raining blows upon you. You shall huddle together in dread, you shall try to creep into shelter—

CHAM. Creep into shelter yourself—in a madhouse; that's the place for you!

STEN. Ha-ha; that is a cheap retort; but you know no better, Mr. Bratsberg! I tell you the wrath of the Lord is in me. It is his will you are opposing. He has destined me for the light—beware how you cast a shadow!—Well, I see I shall make no way with you today; but that matters nothing. I only ask you to speak to your daughter— to prepare her—to give her the opportunity of choosing! Reflect, and look around you. Where can you expect to find a son-in-law among these plodding dunces? Fieldbo says she is deep and steadfast and true. So now you know how matters stand. Good-bye, Chamberlain—I leave you to choose between my friendship and my enmity. Good-bye!

[*Goes out by the back.*]

CHAM. So it has come to this! They dare to treat me thus in my own house

FIEL. Stensgard dares; no one else would.

CHAM. He to-day; others to-mor-ow.

FIEL. Let them come; I shall keep em off; I would go through fire for ou—

CHAM. Yes, you who have caused l the mischief!—H'm, that Stensgard the most impudent scoundrel I have er known! And yet there is some-ing I like about him.

FIEL. He has possibilities—

CHAM. He has openness, Dr. Field-! He doesn't go playing his game be-nd one's back, like some other people; -he!

FIEL. It's not worth disputing out. Only be firm, Chamberlain; no d no again to Stensgard—!

CHAM. Oh, keep your advice to urself! You may rely upon it that ither he nor anyone else—

RIN. [*enters by the door on the ght.*] Excuse me, Chamberlain; one ord—

[*Whispers.*]

CHAM. What? In your room?

RIN. He came in by the back way, d begs you to see him.

CHAM. H'm.—Oh, Doctor, just go o the drawing room for a moment; ere's some one here who—But don't y a word to Selma of Mr. Stensgard d his visit. She must be kept out-e all this business. As for my daugh-, I should prefer that you should say thing to her either.

[FIELDBO *goes into the drawing-room.* NGDAL *has, in the meantime gone ck to his office, whence* MONSEN *pre-tly enters.*]

MON. [*at the door*]. I beg ten thous-d pardons, sir—

CHAM. Oh, come in, come in!

MON. I trust your family is in good health?

CHAM. Thank you. Is there anything you want?

MON. I can't quite put it that way. Thank heaven, I'm one of those that have got pretty nearly all they can want.

CHAM. Oh, indeed? That is a good deal to say.

MON. But I've had to work for it, Chamberlain. Oh, I know you regard my work with no very friendly eye.

CHAM. I cannot suppose that your work is in any way affected by my way of regarding it.

MON. Who knows? I'm thinking of gradually withdrawing from business.

CHAM. Really?

MON. The luck has been on my side. I've gone ahead as far as I care to; so now I think it's about time to slack off a little—

CHAM. Well, I congratulate both you—and other people.

MON. And if I could at the same time do you a service, Chamberlain—

CHAM. Me?

MON. When the Langerud woods were put up to auction five years ago, you made a bid for them—

CHAM. Yes, but you outbade me, and they were knocked down to you.

MON. You can have them now, with the saw-mills and all appurtenances—

CHAM. After all your sinful cutting and hacking—!

MON. Oh, they're valuable still; and with your method of working, in a few years—

CHAM. Thank you; unfortunately I must decline the proposal.

MON. There's a great deal of money in it, Chamberlain. As for me,—I may

tell you I have a great speculation on hand; the stakes are large; I mean there's a big haul to be made—a hundred thousand or so—

CHAM. That is no trifle.

MON. Ha ha ha! A nice round sum to add to the pile. But when you're going into a great battle you need reserve forces, as the saying goes. There's not much ready money about; the names that are worth anything are rather used up—

CHAM. Yes, certain people have taken care of that.

MON. It's a case of you scratch me, I scratch you. Well, Chamberlain, is it to be a bargain? You shall have the woods at your own figure—

CHAM. I will not have them at any figure, Mr. Monsen.

MON. Well, one good offer deserves another. Will you help me, sir?

CHAM. What do you mean?

MON. Of course I'll give good security. I have plenty of property. Look here—these papers—just let me explain my position to you.

CHAM. [*waving the papers aside*]. Is it pecuniary aid you want?

MON. Not ready money; oh, no! But your support, Chamberlain.

CHAM. And you come to me with such a proposal as this?

MON. Yes, precisely to you. I know you've often let bygones be bygones when a man was in real straits.

CHAM. Well, in a way I must thank you for your good opinion—especially at a time like this; but nevertheless—

MON. Won't you tell me, Chamberlain, what sets you against me?

CHAM. Oh, what's the use?

MON. It might lead to a better understanding between us. I've never stood in your way that I know of.

CHAM. You think not? Then let m tell you of one case in which you hav stood in my way. I founded the Iron works Savings Bank for the benefit o my employees and others. But then yo must needs set up as a banker; peopl take their savings to you—

MON. I give higher interest.

CHAM. Yes, but you charge highe interest on loans.

MON. But I don't make so man difficulties about security and so forth

CHAM. That is just the mischie of it; for now we have people makin bargains to the tune of ten or twent thousand dollars though neither of th parties has so much as a brass farthing That is what sets me against you, Mr Monsen. And there is another thing too, that touches me still more nearly Do you think it was with my good wi that my son flung himself into all thes wild speculations?

MON. But how can I help that?

CHAM. It was your example tha infected him, as it did the others. Wh could you not stick to your last?

MON. Remain a lumberman, like m father?

CHAM. Was it a disgrace to be i my employment? Your father made hi bread honourably.

MON. Yes, until he'd almost worke his life out, and at last went over th waterfall with his raft. Do you kno anything of life in that class, Cham berlain? Have you ever realized wha the men have to endure who toil fo you deep in the forests, and along th river-reaches, while you sit comfor ably at home and fatten on the profits Can you blame such a man for strug gling to rise in the world? I had had

tle more schooling than my father; erhaps I had more brains too—

CHAM. Very likely. But by what eans have you risen in the world? You gan by selling brandy. Then you ught up doubtful debts, and enforced em mercilessly;—and so you got on d on. How many people have you not ined to push yourself forward!

MON. That's the course of business; e up, another down.

CHAM. But there are different ethods of business. I know of respec- ble families you have brought to the rkhouse.

MON. Daniel Heire is not very far m the workhouse.

CHAM. I understand you; but I n justify my conduct before God d man! When the country was in dis- ss, after the separation from Den- rk, my father made sacrifices beyond means. Thus part of our property ne into the hands of the entire fam- . What was the result? The people o lived upon the property suffered der Daniel Heire's incompetent man- ement. He cut down timber to the ury, I may even say to the ruin, of district. Was it not my obvious duty put a stop to it if I was able? And it ppened that I was able; I had the on my side.

MON. I, too, have always had the on my side.

CHAM. But what about your sense right, your conscience, if you have a thing? And how you have broken n all social order! How you have aired the respect that should at- h to wealth! People never think of lth! People never think of asking adays how such and such a for- ne was made or how long it has been in such and such a family; they only ask: how much is so-and-so worth?—and they esteem him accordingly. Now I suffer by all this; I find myself regarded as a sort of associate of yours; people speak of us in one breath, because we are the two largest proprietors in the neighborhood. This state of things I cannot long endure.

MON. This state of things shall come to an end, sir; I will give up business, I beg of you, I implore you, to help me!

CHAM. I will not.

MON. I'll pay you what you like—

CHAM. And you dare to—

MON. If not for my sake, then for your son's!

CHAM. My son's!

MON. Yes, he's in it. I reckon he stands to win some twenty thousand dollars.

CHAM. Stands to win.

MON. Yes.

CHAM. Then good God, who stands to lose all this money?

MON. How do you mean?

CHAM. If my son wins, some one or other must lose!

MON. It's a good stroke of business; I'm not in a position to say more. But I need a solid name; only just your endorsement—

CHAM. Endorsement! On a bill—?

MON. Only for ten or fifteen thousand dollars.

CHAM. Do you suppose for a moment that—? My name! In such an affair! My name? As surety, no doubt?

MON. A mere matter of form—

CHAM. A matter of swindling! My name! Not upon any consideration. I have never put my name on other men's paper.

MON. Never? That's an exaggeration.

CHAM. It is the literal truth.

MON. No, not literal; I've seen it with my own eyes.

CHAM. What have you seen?

MON. Your name—on one bill at least.

CHAM. You have never seen it!

MON. I have! On a bill for two thousand dollars. Think again.

CHAM. Not for two thousand nor ten thousand. On my word of honour, never!

MON. Then it's a forgery.

CHAM. Forgery? Forgery? Where did you see it? In whose hands?

MON. That I won't tell you.

CHAM. Ha-ha! We shall soon find that out—

MON. Listen to me—!

CHAM. Silence! It has come to this then! Forgery. They must mix me up in their abominations! No wonder, then, that people bracket me with the rest of you.

MON. Chamberlain—for your own sake and for the sake of others—

CHAM. Off with you! Out of my sight! It is you that are at the root of it all!—Yes you are! Woe unto him from whom offences come. Your home-life is scandalous. What sort of society do you get about you? Persons from Christiania and elsewhere, who think only of eating and drinking, and do not care in what company they gorge themselves. Silence! There is worse behind. You have had scandals with your own maid-servants. You drove your wife out of her mind by your ill-treatment and debauchery.

MON. Come, this is going too far! You shall pay for these words.

CHAM. Oh, to the deuce with you threats! What harm can you do t me? Me? You asked what I had t say against you. Well, I have sai it. Now you know why I have kep you out of decent society.

MON. Yes, and now I'll drag you decent society down—

CHAM. That way!

MON. I know my way, Chambe lain! [*Goes out by the back*].

CHAM. [*opens the door on the righ and calls*]. Ringdal, Ringdal—com here!

RIN. What is it, sir?

CHAM. [*calls into the drawing-room*] Doctor, come this way!—Now, Ring dal, now you shall see my prophecie fulfilled.

FIEL. [*entering*]. What can I d for you, Chamberlain?

RIN. What prophecies, sir?

CHAM. What do you say to thi Doctor? You have always accused m of exaggerating when I said that Mor sen was corrupting the neighbo hood.

FIEL. Well, what then?

CHAM. What do you think? The are forgeries going about.

RIN. Forgeries?

CHAM. Yes, forgeries! And whos name do you think they have forged Why, mine!

FIEL. Who in the world can hav done it?

CHAM. How can I tell? I don know all the scoundrels in the distric But we shall soon find out.—Docto do me a service. The papers mu have come into the hands either of th Savings Bank or the Iron-works Ban Drive up to Lundestad; he is the d rector who knows most about thing

FIEL. Certainly; at once.

RIN. Lundestad is here at the orks today; there's a meeting of the hool committee.

CHAM. So much the better. Find m; bring him here.

FIEL. I'll go at once. [*Goes out at e back.*]

CHAM. And you, Ringdal, make inuiries at the Iron-works. As soon as e have got to the bottom of the matr, we'll lay an information. No ercy to the scoundrels!

RIN. Very good, sir. Bless me, ho'd have thought of such a thing? *Goes out at the right.*]

[*The* CHAMBERLAIN paces the room *ce or twice, and is then about to go to his study. At that instant* ERIK RATSBERG *enters from the back.*]

ERIK. My dear father—!

CHAM. Oh, are you there?

ERIK. I want so much to speak to u.

CHAM. H'm; I'm not much in the mour for speaking to any one. What it?

ERIK. You know I have never xed you up in my affairs, father.

CHAM. No; that is an honour I ould certainly have declined.

ERIK. But now I am forced to—

CHAM. What are you forced to ?

ERIK. Father, you must help me!

CHAM. With money! You may be ry sure that—

ERIK. Only this once! I swear I'll ver again—The fact is, I am under rtain engagements to Monsen of onelee—

CHAM. I know that. You have a lliant speculation on hand.

ERIK. A speculation? We? No! Who told you so?

CHAM. Monsen himself.

ERIK. Has Monsen been here?

CHAM. He has just gone. I showed him the door.

ERIK. If you don't help me, father, I am ruined.

CHAM. You?

ERIK. Yes. Monsen has advanced me money. I had to pay terribly dear for it; and now the bills have fallen due—

CHAM. There we have it! What did I tell you—?

ERIK. Yes, yes; it's too late now—

CHAM. Ruined! In two years! But how could you expect anything else? What had you to do among these charlatans that go about dazzling people's eyes with wealth that never existed! They were no company for you. Among people of that sort you must meet cunning with cunning, or you'll go to the wall; you have learnt that now.

ERIK. Father, will you save me or will you not?

CHAM. No; for the last time, no. I will not.

ERIK. My honour is at stake—

CHAM. Oh, let us have no big phrases! There's no honour involved in commercial success nowadays. Go home and make up your accounts; pay every man his due, and have done with it, the sooner the better.

ERIK. Oh, you don't know—

ERIK. It's only that I am ruined!

SELMA *and* THORA *enter from the drawing-room.*

SEL. Is that Erik's voice?—Good heavens, what is the matter?

CHAM. Nothing. Go into the drawing-room again.

SEL. No, I won't go. I will know. Erik, what is it? Tell me!

ERIK. It's only that I am ruined!

THORA. Ruined!

CHAM. There, you see!

SEL. What is ruined?

ERIK. Everything.

SEL. Do you mean you have lost your money?

ERIK. Money, house, and everything!

SEL. Is that what you call everything?

ERIK. Let us go, Selma. You are all I have left me. We must bear it together.

SEL. The blow? Bear it together? [*With a cry.*] Do you think I am fit for that, now?

CHAM. For heavens sake—!

ERIK. What do you mean?

THORA. Oh, Selma, take care!

SEL. No, I won't take care! I cannot go on lying and shamming any longer! I must speak the truth. I will not "bear" anything!

CHAM. What are you saying?

SEL. Oh, how cruel you have been to me! Shamefully—all of you! It was my part always to accept—never to give. I have been like a pauper among you. You never came and demanded a sacrifice of me; I was not fit to bear anything! I hate you! I loathe you!

ERIK. What can this mean?

CHAM. She is ill; she is out of her mind.

SEL. How I have thirsted for a single drop of your troubles, your anxieties! But when I begged for it you only laughed me off. You have dressed me up like a doll; you have played with me as you would play with a child. How I yearned for large, and high, and strenuous part i life! Now you come to me, Erik, no that you have nothing else left. Bu I will not be treated simply as a las resource. I will have nothing to d with your troubles now. I won't sta with you! I will rather play and sin in the streets—! Let me be! Let m be! [*She rushes out by the back.*]

CHAM. Thora, was there any mean ing in all that, or—

THORA. Oh, yes, there was meanin in it; if only I had seen it sooner

[*Goes out by the back*]

ERIK. No! All else I can lose, bu not her! Selma, Selma!

[*Follows* THORA *and* SELMA.

RIN. [*enters from the right*]. Cham berlain!

CHAM. Well, what is it?

RIN. I have been to the Bank—

CHAM. The Bank? Oh, yes, abou the bill—

RIN. It's all right; they have neve had any bill endorsed by you—

FIELDBO *and* LUNDESTAD *enter b the back.*

FIEL. False alarm, Chamberlain!

CHAM. Indeed? Not at the Saving Bank either?

LUN. Certainly not. During all th years I've been a director I have neve once seen your name; except, of cours on your son's bill.

CHAM. My son's bill?

LUN. Yes, the bill you accepte for him early this spring.

CHAM. My son? My son? I you dare to tell me—?

LUN. Why, bless me, just think moment; the bill for two thousand do lars drawn by your son—

CHAM. [*groping for a chair*]. Oh, y God—!

FIEL. For heaven's sake!

RIN. It's not possible that—!

CHAM. [*who has sunk down on a air*]. Quietly, quietly! Drawn by y son, you say? Accepted by me? or two thousand dollars?

FIEL. [*to* LUNDESTAD]. And this bill in the Savings Bank?

LUN. Not now; it was redeemed st week by Monsen—

CHAM. By Monsen—?

RIN. Monsen may still be at the rks: I'll go—

CHAM. Stop here!

DANIEL HEIRE *enters the back.*

HEIRE. Good-morning, gentlemen! od-morning, Chamberlain! Thank u so much for the delightful eve- ng we spent yesterday. What do u think I've just heard—?

RIN. Excuse me; we are busy —

HEIRE. So are other people, I can l you; our friend from Stonelee, r example—

CHAM. Monsen?

HEIRE. Hee-hee; it's a pretty story! e electioneering intrigues are in full ing. And what do you think is the t idea? They are going to bribe u, Chamberlain!

LUN. To bribe—?

HEIRE. Deuce take me if it isn't the st impudent thing I ever heard of! just looked in at Madam Rundhol- n's to have a glass of bitters. There Messrs. Monsen and Stensgard nking port—filthy stuff! I wouldn't ch it; but they might have had decency to offer me a glass, all same. However, Monsen turned me and said, "What do you bet that Chamberlain Bratsberg won't go with our party at the preliminary election tomorrow?" "Indeed," said I, "how's that to be managed?" "Oh," he said, "this bill will persuade him—"

FIEL. Bill—?

LUN. At the election—?

CHAM. Well? What then?

HEIRE. Oh, I know no more. They said something about two thousand dollars. That's the figure they rate a gentleman's conscience at! Oh, it's abominable, I say!

CHAM. A bill for two thousand dollars?

RIN. And Monsen has it?

HEIRE. No, he handed it over to Stensgard.

LUN. Indeed!

FIEL. To Stensgard?

CHAM. Are you sure of that?

HEIRE. Quite certain. "You can make what use you please of it," he said. But I don't understand—

LUN. I want to speak to you, Mr. Heire—and you too, Ringdal.

[*The three converse in a whisper at the back.*

FIEL. Chamberlain!

CHAM. Well?

FIEL. Your son's bill is genuine, of course—?

CHAM. One would suppose so.

FIEL. Of course. But now if the forged bill were to turn up—?

CHAM. I will lay no information.

FIEL. Naturally not;—but you must do more.

CHAM. [*rising*]. I can do no more.

FIEL. Yes, for heaven's sake, you can and must. You must save the poor fellow—

CHAM. In what way?

FIEL. Quite simply: by acknowledging the signature.

CHAM. Then you think, Doctor, that we stick at nothing in our family?

FIEL. I am trying to think for the best, Chamberlain.

CHAM. And do you believe for a moment that I can tell a lie?--that I can play into the hands of forgers?

FIEL. And do you realize what will be the consequences if you do not?

CHAM. The offender must settle that with the law.

[*He goes out to the left.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE—*A public room in* MADAM RUNDHOLMEN'S *hotel. Entrance door in the back; a smaller door on either side. A window on the right; before it, a table with writing materials; further back, in the middle of the room, another table.*

MADAM [*within, on the left, heard talking loudly*]. Oh, let them go about their business! Tell them they've come here to vote and not to drink. If they won't wait, they can do the other thing.

STEN. [*enters by the back*]. Good-morning! H'm, h'm, Madam Rundholmen! [*Goes to the door on the left and knocks.*] Good-morning, Madam Rundholmen!

MADAM [*within.*] Oh! Who's there?

STEN. It is I—Stensgard. May I come in?

MADAM. No, indeed, you mustn't! No! I'm not dress'd.

STEN. What? Are you so late today?

MADAM. Oh, I can tell you I've been up since all hours; but one must look a little decent, you know. [*Peeps out, with a kerchief over her head.*] Well, what is it? No, you really mustn't look at me, Mr. Stensgard.—Oh, there's someone else! [*Disappears, slamming the door to*].

ASL. [*enters from the back with bundle of papers*]. Good-morning, Mr. Stensgard.

STEN. Well, is it in?

ASL. Yes, here it is. Lock—"The Independence Day Celebrations—From Our Special Correspondent." Here's the founding of the League on the other side, and your speech up here. I've leaded all the abuse.

STEN. It seems to me it's all leaded.

ASL. Pretty nearly.

STEN. And the extra number was of course distributed yesterday?

ASL. Of course; all over the district, both to subscribers and others. Would you like to see it? [*Hands him a copy.*]

STEN. [*running his eye over the paper*]. "Our respected member, Mr. Lundestad, proposes to resign . . . long and faithful service . . . in the words of the poet: 'Rest, patriot, rest is thy due!'" H'm! "The association founded on Independence Day!: the League of Youth. . . . Mr. Stensgard the guiding intelligence of the League . . . timely reforms, credit on easier terms." Ah, that's very good. Has the polling begun?

ASL. It's in full swing. The whole League is on the spot—both voters and others.

STEN. Oh, deuce take the others—between ourselves, of course. Well, you go down and talk to the waverers.

ASL. All right.

STEN. You can tell them that I am pretty much at one with Lundestad.

ASL. Trust to me; I know the local situation.

STEN. One thing more; just to
blige me, Aslaksen, don't drink today.
ASL. Oh, what do you mean—!
STEN. We'll have a jolly evening
hen it's all over; but remember what
ou, as well as I, have at stake; your
aper— Come, now, my good fellow,
t me see that you can—
ASL. There that's enough now; I'm
d enough to look after myself. [*Goes
it to the right.*]
MADAM [*enters from the left, elab-
rately dressed*]. Now, Mr. Stensgard,
m at your service. Is it anything of
nportance—?
STEN. No, only that I want you to
good enough to let me know when
r. Monsen comes.
MADAM. He won't be here today.
STEN. Not to-day?
MADAM. No; he drove past here at
ur this morning! he's always driving
out nowadays. What's more, he came
and roused me out of bed—he want-
to borrow money, you must know.
STEN. Monsen did?
MADAM. Yes. He's a tremendous
an to get through money is Monsen.
hope things may turn out all right
r him. And I say the same to you;
r I hear you're going into Parlia-
ent.
STEN. I? Nonsense. Who told you
?
MADAM. Oh, some of Mr. Lunde-
d's people.
DANIEL HEIRE [*enters from the
ck*]. Good-morning! I'm not in the
y, am I?
MADAM. Gracious, no!
HEIRE. Good God, how resplendent!
n it be for me that you've got your-
f up like this?
MADAM. Of course. It's for you
bachelors we get ourselves up, isn't it?
HEIRE. For marrying men, Madam Rundholmen; for marrying men! Unfortunately, my law-suits take up all my time—
MADAM. Oh, nonsense; you've always plenty of time to get married.
HEIRE. No; deuce take me if I have! Marriage is a thing you've got to give your whole mind to. Well, well—if you can't have me, you must put up with somebody else. For you ought to marry again.
MADAM. Now, do you know, I'm sometimes of the same opinion.
HEIRE. Naturally; when once one has tasted the joys of matrimony—Of course, poor Rundholmen was one in a thousand—
MADAM. Well, I won't go so far as that; he was a bit rough, and rather too fond of his glass; but a husband's always a husband.
HEIRE. Very true, Madam Rundholmen; a husband's a husband, and a widow's a widow—
MADAM. And business is business. Oh, when I think of all I've got to attend to, I don't know whether I'm on my heels or my head. Every one wants to buy; but when it comes to paying, I've got to go in for summonses and executions, and Lord knows what. Upon my word, I'll soon have to engage a lawyer all to myself.
HEIRE. I'll tell you what, Madam Rundholmen, you should retain Mr. Stensgard; he's a bachelor.
MADAM. Oh, how you do talk! I won't listen to a word more. [*Goes out to the right.*]
HEIRE. A substantial woman, sir! Comfortable and well-preserved; no children up to date; money well in-

vested. Education too; she's widely read, sir.

STEN. Widely read, eh?

HEIRE. Hee-hee; she ought to be; she had charge of Alm's circulating library for a couple of years. But your head's full of other things today, I daresay.

STEN. Not at all; I don't even know that I shall vote. Who are you going to vote for, Mr. Heire?

HEIRE. Haven't got a vote, sir. There was only one kennel that would qualify in the market, and that you bought.

STEN. If you're at a loss for a lodging, I'll give it up to you.

HEIRE. Hee-hee, you're joking. Ah, youth, youth! What a pleasant humour it has! But now I must be off and have a look at the menagerie. I'm told your whole League is afoot. [*Sees* FIELDBO, *who enters from the back.*] Here's the Doctor, too! I suppose you have come on a scientific mission?

FIEL. A scientific mission?

HEIRE. Yes, to study the epidemic; you've heard of the virulent *rabies agitatoria* that has broken out? God be with you, my dear young friends? [*Goes out to the right.*]

STEN. Tell me quickly—have you seen the Chamberlain today?

FIEL. Yes.

STEN. And what did he say?

FIEL. What did he say?

STEN. Yes, you know I have written to him.

FIEL. Have you? What did you write?

STEN. That I am still of the same mind about his daughter; that I want to talk the matter over with him; and that I propose to call on him to-mor row.

FIEL. If I were you, I should a least defer my visit. It is the Cham berlain's birthday tomorrow; a crowd of people will be there—

STEN. That's all right; the more the better. I hold big cards in my hand, let me tell you.

FIEL. And perhaps you have bluffed a little with your big cards.

STEN. How do you mean?

FIEL. I mean you have perhaps embellished your declaration of love with a few little threats or so?

STEN. Fieldbo, you have seen the letter!

FIEL. No, I assure you.

STEN. Well, then, frankly—I have threatened him.

FIEL. Ah! Then I have, in a way an answer to your letter.

STEN. An answer? Out with it man!

FIEL. [*shows him a sealed paper*] Look here—the Chamberlain's proxy

STEN. And who does he vote for?

FIEL. Not for you, at any rate.

STEN. For whom then? For whom

FIEL. For the Sheriff and the Provost.

STEN. What! Not even for Lunde stad.

FIEL. No. And do you know why Because Lundestad is going to pro pose you as his successor.

STEN. He dares to do this!

FIEL. Yes, he does. And he added "If you see Stensgard, you can tel him how I am voting; it will show hin on what footing we stand."

STEN. Good; since he will have i so!

FIEL. Take care; it's danger to tu

at an old tower—it may come down on your head.

STEN. Oh, I have learnt wisdom in these two days.

FIEL. Indeed? You're not so wise but that you let old Lundestad lead you by the nose.

STEN. Do you think I don't understand that he took me up because he thought I had won over the Chamberlain, and because he wanted to break up our League and keep Monen out?

FIEL. But now that he knows you haven't won over the Chamberlain—

STEN. He has gone too far to draw back; and I've made good use of the time, and scattered announcements broadcast. Most of his supporters will abstain from voting; mine are all here—

FIEL. It's a big stride from the preliminary election to the final election.

STEN. Lundestad knows very well that if he fails me in the College of Electors, I'll soon agitate him out of the town Council.

FIEL. Not a bad calculation. And to succeed in all this, you feel that you must strike root here more firmly than you have as yet done?

STEN. Yes, these people always demand material guarantees, community of interests—

FIEL. Just so; and therefore Miss Bratsberg is to be sacrificed?

STEN. Sacrificed? If that were so, I should be no better than a scoundrel. But it will be for her happiness, that I'm convinced. What now? Fieldbo, why do you look like that? You have some underhand scheme of your own.

FIEL. I?

STEN. Yes, you have! You are intriguing against me, behind my back. Why do you do that? Be open with me—will you?

FIEL. Frankly, I won't. You are so dangerous, so unscrupulous—well, so reckless at any rate, that one dare not be open with you. Whatever you know, you make use of without hesitation. But this I say to you as a friend: put Miss Bratsberg out of your head.

STEN. I cannot. I must extricate myself from these sordid surroundings. I can't go on living in this hugger-mugger way. Here have I got to be hail-fellow-well-met with Dick, Tom, and Harry; to whisper in corners with them, to hob-nob with them, to laugh at their beery witticisms; to be hand in glove with hobbledehoys and unlicked cubs. How can I keep my love of the People untarnished in the midst of all this? I feel as if all the electricity went out of my words. I have no elbow-room, no fresh air to breathe. Oh, a longing comes over me at time for exquisite women! I want something that brings beauty with it! I lie here in a sort of turbid eddy, while out there the clear blue current sweeps past me— But what can you understand of all this!

LUN. [*enters from the back.*] Ah, here we are. Good-morning, gentlemen.

STEN. I have news for you, Mr. Lundestad! Do you know who the Chamberlain is voting for?

FIEL. Silence! It's dishonourable of you.

STEN. What do I care? He is voting for the Sheriff and the Provost.

LUN. Oh, that was to be expected.

You went and ruined your chances with him—though I implored you to play your cards neatly.

STEN. I shall play them neatly enough—in future.

FIEL. Take care—two can play at that game. [*Goes out to the right.*]

STEN. That fellow has something up his sleeve. Have you any idea what it can be?

LUN. No, I haven't. But, by-the-bye, I see you are flourishing in the paper to-day.

STEN. I?

LUN. Yes, with a nice little epitaph on me.

STEN. Oh, that's that beast Aslaksen, of course—

LUN. Your attack on the Chamberlain is in too.

STEN. I don't know anything about that. If it's to be war between the Chamberlain and me, I have sharper weapons.

LUN. Indeed!

STEN. Have you ever seen this bill? Look at it. Is it good?

LUN. Good, you say? This bill here?

STEN. Yes; look closely at it.

HEIRE [*enters from the right*]. Why, what the deuce can be the meaning of— Ah, how interesting! Do remain as you are, gentlemen, I beg! Do you know what you irresistibly remind me of? Of a summer night in the Far North.

LUN. That's a curious simile.

HEIRE. A very obvious one—the setting and the rising sun together. Delightful, delightful! But, talking of that, what the deuce is the matter outside there? Your fellow citizens are scuttling about like frightened fowls, cracking and crowing and not knowing what perch to settle on.

STEN. Well, it's an occasion of great importance.

HEIRE. Oh, you and your importance! No, it's something quite different, my dear friends. There are whispers of a great failure; a bankruptcy—oh, not political, Mr. Lundestad I don't mean that!

STEN. A bankruptcy?

HEIRE. Hee-hee! That puts life into our legal friend. Yes, a bankruptcy; some one is on his last legs; the axe is laid to the root of the tree—I say no more! Two strange gentlemen have been seen driving past; but where to? To whose address? Do you know anything, Mr. Lundestad?

LUN. I know how to hold my tongue, Mr. Heire.

HEIRE. Of course, you are a statesman, a diplomatist. But I must be off and find out all I can about it. It's such sport with these heroes of finance they are like beads on a string—when one slips off, all the rest follow. [*Goes out by the back.*]

STEN. Is there any truth in all this gossip?

LUN. You showed me a bill; I thought I saw young Bratsberg's name upon it?

STEN. The Chamberlain's too.

LUN. And you asked me if it was good?

STEN. Yes; just look at it.

LUN. It's perhaps not so good as it might be.

STEN. You see it then?

LUN. What?

STEN. That it is a forgery.

LUN. A forgery? Forged bills are

ften the safest; people redeem them
rst.

STEN. But what do you think? Isn't
a forgery?

LUN. I don't much like the look of
.

STEN. How so?

LUN. I'm afraid there are too many
f these about, Mr. Stensgard.

STEN. What! It's not possible that
—?

LUN. If young Mr. Bratsberg slips
ff the string, those nearest him are
nly too likely to follow.

STEN. [*seizes his arm*]. What do you
ean by those nearest him?

LUN. Who can be nearer than
ther and son?

STEN. Why, good God——!

LUN. Remember, I say nothing! It
as Daniel Heire that was talking of
ilure and bankruptcy and—

STEN. This is a thunderbolt to me.

LUN. Oh, many a man that seemed
id enough has gone to the wall before
w. Perhaps he's too good-natured;
es and backs bills; ready money isn't
ways to be had; property has to be
ld for an old song——

STEN. And of course this falls on—
lls on the children as well.

LUN. Yes, I'm heartily grieved for
iss Bratsberg. She didn't get much
om her mother; and heaven knows if
en the little she has is secured.

STEN. Oh, now I understand Field-
's advice! He's a true friend, after
.

LUN. What did Doctor Fieldbo say?

STEN. He was too loyal to say any-
ing, but I understand him all the
me. And now I understand you too,
r. Lundestad.

LUN. Have you not understood me before?

STEN. Not thoroughly. I forget the proverb about the rats and the sinking ship.

LUN. That's not a very nice way to put it. But what's the matter with you? You look quite ill. Good God, I haven't gone and blasted your hopes, have I?

STEN. How do you mean?

LUN. Yes, yes—I see it all. Old fool that I am! My dear Mr. Stensgard, if you really love the girl, what does it matter whether she is rich or poor?

STEN. Matter? No, of course——

LUN. Good Lord, we all know happiness isn't a matter of money.

STEN. Of course not.

LUN. And with industry and determination you'll soon be on your feet again. Don't let poverty frighten you. I know what love is; I went into all that in my young days. A happy home; a faithful woman——! My dear young friend, beware how you take any step that may involve you in life-long self-reproach.

STEN. But what will become of your plans?

LUN. Oh, they must go as best they can. I couldn't think of demanding the sacrifice of your heart!

STEN. But I will make the sacrifice. Yes, I will show you that I have the strength for it. Think of the longing multitude out there; they claim me with a sort of voiceless pathos. I cannot, I dare not, fail them!

LUN. Yes, but the stake in the district——?

STEN. I shall take measures to fulfill the demands of my fellow citizens in that respect, Mr. Lundestad. I see

a way, a new way; and I will follow it up. I renounce the happiness of toiling in obscurity for the woman I love. I say to my fellow countrymen: "Here I am—take me!"

LUN. [*looks at him in quiet admiration and presses his hand.*] You are indeed a man of rare gifts, Mr. Stensgard. [*Goes out to the right.*]

[STENSGARD *paces the room several times, now stopping for a moment at the window, now running his fingers through his hair. Presently* BASTIAN MONSEN *enters from the back.*]

BAS. Here I am, my dear friend.

STEN. Where have you come from?

BAS. From the Nation.

STEN. The Nation? What does that mean?

BAS. Don't you know what the Nation means? It means the People; the common people; those who have nothing and are nothing; those who lie chained—

STEN. What monkey-tricks are these, I should like to know?

BAS. Monkey-tricks?

STEN. I have noticed lately that you go about mimicking me; you imitate even my clothes and my handwriting. Be kind enough to stop that.

BAS. What do you mean? Don't we belong to the same party?

STEN. Yes, but I won't put up with this—you make yourself ridiculous——

BAS. By being like you?

STEN. By aping me. Be sensible now, Monsen, and give it up. It's quite disgusting. But look here—can you tell me when your father is coming back?

BAS. I have no idea. I believe he's gone to Christiana; he may not be back for a week or so.

STEN. Indeed? I'm sorry for that. He has a big stroke of business on hand, I hear.

BAS. I have a big stroke of business on hand too. Look here, Stensgard, you must do me a service.

STEN. Willingly. What is it?

BAS. I feel so full of energy. I have to thank you for that; you have stimulated me. I feel I must do something, Stensgard:—I want to get married.

STEN. To get married? To whom?

BAS. Sh! Some one in this house.

STEN. Madam Rundholmen?

BAS. Sh! Yes, it's her. Put in a good word for me, do! This sort of thing is just the thing for me. She's in the swim, you know; she's on the best of terms with the Chamberlain's people, ever since her sister was housekeeper there. If I get her, perhaps I shall get the town-contracts too. So that on the whole—damn it, I love her.

STEN. Oh, love, love! Have done with that sickening hypocrisy.

BAS. Hypocrisy!

STEN. Yes; you are lying to yourself, at any rate. You talk in one breath of town-contracts and of love. Why not call a spade a spade? There's something sordid about all this; I will have nothing to do with it.

BAS. But listen——!

STEN. Do your dirty work yourself, I say! [*To* FIELDBO, *who enters from the right.*] Well, how goes the election?

FIEL. Excellently for you, it appears. I saw Lundestad just now; he said you were getting all the votes.

STEN. Am I indeed?

FIEL. But what good will they do you? Since you're not a man of property——

STEN. [*between his teeth*]. Isn't it onfounded!

FIEL. Well, you can't do two things t once. If you win on the one side, ou must be content to lose on the ther. Good-bye! [*Goes out by the ack.*]

BAS. What did he mean by winning nd losing?

STEN. I'll tell you afterwards. But ow, my dear Monsen—to return to hat we were talking about—I prom-sed to put in a good word for you—

BAS. You promised? On the con-rary, I thought you said——?

STEN. Oh, nonsense; you didn't let e explain myself fully. What I mean as that there is something sordid in ixing up your love with town-con-acts and so forth; it is an offence gainst all that is noblest in your na-ure. So, my dear friend, if you really ve the girl——

BAS. The widow——

STEN. Yes, yes; it's all the same. mean when one really loves a woman, at in itself should be a conclusive eason——

BAS. Yes, that's just what I think. o you'll speak for me, will you?

STEN. Yes, with great pleasure—t on one condition.

BAS. What's that?

STEN. Tit for tat, my dear Bastian -you must put in a word for me too.

BAS. I? With whom?

STEN. Have you really not noticed ything? Yet it's before your very se.

BAS. You surely don't mean—

STEN. Your sister Ragna? Yes, it she. Oh, you don't know how I have en moved by the sight of her quiet, lf-sacrificing devotion to her home—

BAS. Do you really mean to say so?

STEN. And you, with your pene-trating eye, have suspected nothing?

BAS. Yes, at one time I did think —; but now people are talking of your hanging about the Chamberlain's—

STEN. Oh, the Chamberlain's! Well, Monsen, I'll tell you frankly that for a moment I did hesitate; but, thank goodness, that is over; now I see my way quite clear before me.

BAS. There's my hand. I'll back you up, you may be sure. And as for Ragna—why, she daren't do anything but what I and father wish.

STEN. Yes, but your father—that's just what I wanted to say—

BAS. Sh! There—I hear Madam Rundholmen. Now's your chance to speak for me, if she's not too busy; for then she's apt to be snappish. You do your best, my dear fellow, and leave the rest to me. Do you happen to have seen Aslaksen?

STEN. He's probably at the polling-booth.

[BASTIAN *goes out by the back, as* MADAM RUNDHOLMEN *enters from the right.*]

MADAM. Things are going as smooth as possible, Mr. Stensgard; every one is voting for you.

STEN. That's very odd.

MADAM. Goodness knows what Mon-sen of Stonelee will say.

STEN. I want a word with you, Madam Rundholmen.

MADAM. Well, what is it?

STEN. Will you listen to me?

MADAM. Lord yes, that I will.

STEN. Well then: you were talking just now about being alone in the world—

MADAM. Oh, it was that horrid old Heire—

STEN. You were saying how hard it is for an unprotected widow—

MADAM. Yes, indeed; you should just try it, Mr. Stensgard!

STEN. But now if there came a fine young man—

MADAM. A fine young man?

STEN. One who had long loved you in secret—

MADAM. Oh, come now, Mr. Stensgard, I won't hear any more of your nonsense.

STEN. You must! A young man who, like yourself, finds it hard to be alone in the world—

MADAM. Well, what then? I don't understand you at all.

STEN. If you could make two people happy, Madam Rundholmen—yourself and—

MADAM. And a fine young man?

STEN. Just so; now, answer me—

MADAM. Mr. Stensgard, you can't be in earnest.

STEN. You don't suppose I would jest on such a subject? Should you be disposed—?

MADAM. Yes, that I am, the Lord knows! Oh, you dear, sweet—

STEN. [*recoiling a step*]. What is this?

MADAM. Bother, here comes some one!

RAGNA MONSEN *enters hastily, and in evident disquietude, from the back.*

RAGNA. I beg your pardon—isn't my father here?

MADAM. Your father? Yes; no;—I—I don't know—excuse me—

RAGNA. Where is he?

MADAM. Your father? Oh, he drove past here—

STEN. Towards Christiania.

RAGNA. No; it's impossible—

MADAM. Yes, I know for certain he drove down the road. Or, my dear Miss Monsen, you can't think how happy I am! Wait a moment—I'll just run to the cellar, and fetch up a bottle of the real thing. [*Goes out to the left.*]

STEN. Tell me, Miss Monsen—is it really your father you are looking for?

RAGNA. Yes, of course it is.

STEN. And you didn't know that he had gone away?

RAGNA. Oh, how should I know? They tell me nothing. But to Christiania—? That's impossible; they would have met him. Good-bye!

STEN. [*intercepts her*]. Ragna! Tell me! Why are you so changed towards me?

RAGNA. I? Let me pass! Let me go!

STEN. No, you shall not go! I believe Providence guided you here at this moment. Oh, why do you shrink from me? You used not to.

RAGNA. Ah, that is all over, thank God!

STEN. But why?

RAGNA. I have learnt to know you better; it is well that I learned in time.

STEN. Oh, that is it! People have been lying about me? Perhaps I am to blame too; I have been lost in a maze of perplexities. But that is past now. Oh, the very sight of you makes a better man of me. It is you I care for, deeply and truly; it is you I love, Ragna—you and no other!

RAGNA. Let me pass! I am afraid of you—

STEN. Oh, but tomorrow, Ragna—may I come and speak to you to-morrow?

RAGNA. Yes, yes, if you must; only or heaven's sake not today.

STEN. Only not today! Hurrah! have won; now I am happy!

MADAM [*enters from the left with ake and wine*]. Come now, we must rink a glass for luck.

STEN. For luck in love! Here's to ve and happiness! Hurrah for to-orrow! [*He drinks.*]

HELLE [*entering from the right, to* AGNA]. Have you found him?

RAGNA. No, he is not here. Come, me!

MADAM. Heaven help us, what's the atter?

HELLE. Nothing; only some visitors ave arrived at Stonelee—

RAGNA. Thanks for all your kind-ess; Madam Rundholmen—

MADAM. Oh, have you got visitors your hands again?

RAGNA. Yes, yes; excuse me; I must home. Goodbye!

STEN. Goodbye—till tomorrow!

[RAGNA *and* HELLE *go out by the ack.* DANIEL HEIRE *enters from the ght.*]

HEIRE. Ha-ha! It's going like a use on fire! They're all cackling tensgard, Stensgard! They're all umping for you. Now you should ump for him too, Madam Rundhol-en!

MADAM. Hey, that's an idea. Are ey all voting for him?

HEIRE. Unanimously. Mr. Stens-rd enjoys the confidence of the con-tuency, as the saying is. Old Lunde-ad is going about with a face like a ckled cucumber. Oh, it's a pleasure see it all.

MADAM. They shan't regret having ted for him. If I can't vote, I can stand treat. [*Goes out to the left.*]

HEIRE. Ah, you are the man for the widows, Mr. Stensgard! I'll tell you what—if you can only get hold of her, you're a made man, sir!

STEN. Get hold of Madam Rundholmen?

HEIRE. Yes, why not? She's a substantial woman in every sense of the word. She'll be mistress of the situation as soon as the Stonelee card-castle has come to grief.

STEN. There's nothing wrong at Stonelee, is there?

HEIRE. Isn't there? You have a short memory, my dear sir. Didn't I tell you there were rumours of failure, and bankruptcy, and—?

STEN. Well, what then?

HEIRE. What then? That's just what we want to know. There's a hue and cry after Monsen; two men have come to Stonelee—

STEN. Yes, I know—a couple of visitors—

HEIRE. Uninvited visitors, my dear young friend; there are whispers of the police and infuriated creditors—there's something queer about the accounts, you must know! Talking of that—what paper was that Monsen gave you yesterday?

STEN. Oh, just a paper— Something queer about the accounts, you say? Look here! you know Chamberlain Bratsberg's signature?

HEIRE. Hee-hee! I should rather think I did.

STEN. [*produces the bill*]. Well, look at this.

HEIRE. Give it here—I'm rather short-sighted, you know. [*After examining it.*] That, my dear sir? That's not the Chamberlain's hand.

STEN. Not? Then it is—?

HEIRE. And it's drawn by Monsen?

STEN. No, by young Mr. Bratsberg.

HEIRE. Nonsense! Let me see. [*Looks at the paper and hands it back again.*] You can light your cigar with this.

STEN. What! The drawer's name too—?

HEIRE. A forgery, young man; a forgery, as sure as my name's Daniel. You have only to look at it with the keen eye of suspicion—

STEN. But how can that be? Monsen can't have known—

HEIRE. Monsen? No, he knows nothing about either his own paper or other people's. But I'm glad it has come to an end, Mr. Stensgard!—It's a satisfaction to one's moral sense. Ah, I have often glowed with a noble indignation, if I may say so, at having to stand by and see—I say no more! But the best of it all is that now Monsen is down he'll drag young Bratsberg after him; and the son will bring the father down—

STEN. Yes, so Lundestad said.

HEIRE. But of course there's method even in bankruptcy. You'll see; I am an old hand at prophecy. Monsen will go to prison; young Bratsberg will compound with his creditors; and the Chamberlain will be placed under trustees; that's to say, his creditors will present him with an annuity of a couple of thousand dollars. That's how things go, Mr. Stensgard; I know it, I know it! What says the classic? *Fiat justitia, pereat mundau;* which means; Fie on what's called justice in this wicked world, sir!

STEN. [*pacing the room*]. One after the other! Both ways barred!

HEIRE. What the deuce—?

STEN. And now too! Just at this moment!

ASL. [*enters from the right.*] I congratulate you, chosen of the people!

STEN. Elected!

ASL. Elected by 117 votes, and Lundestad by 53. The rest all nowhere.

HEIRE. Your first step on the path of glory, Mr. Stensgard.

ASL. And it shall cost you a bowl of punch—

HEIRE. Well, it's the first step that costs, they say.

ASL. [*goes off to the left, shouting.*] Punch, Madam Rundholmen! A bowl of punch! The chosen of the people stands treat!

[LUNDESTAD, *and after him several* ELECTORS *enter from the right.*]

HEIRE. [*in a tone of condolence to* LUNDESTAD]. Fifty-three! That's the grey-haired patriot's reward!

LUN. [*whispers to* STENSGARD.] Are you firm in your resolve?

STEN. What's the use of being firm when everything is tumbling about your ears?

LUN. Do you think the game is lost?

ASL. [*returning by the left*]. Madam Rundholmen stands treat herself. She says she has the best right to.

STEN. [*struck by an idea*]. Madam Rundholmen!—has the right to—!

LUN. What?

STEN. The game is not lost, Mr. Lundestad!

[*Sits at the right-hand table and writes.*]

LUN. [*in a low voice.*] Oh, Aslaksen—can you get something into your next paper for me?

ASL. Of course I can. Is it libel-ous?

LUN. No, certainly not!

ASL. Well, never mind; I'll take it ll the same.

LUN. It is my political last will and estament; I shall write it to-night.

A MAID-SERVANT [*enters from the eft.*] The punch with Madam Rund-olmen's compliments.

ASL. Hurrah! Now there's some ife in the local situation.

[*He places the punch-bowl on the niddle table, serves the others, nd drinks freely himself during the ollowing scene.* BASTIAN MONSEN *has neanwhile entered from the right.*]

BAS. [*softly*]. You won't forget ny letter?

ASL. Don't be afraid. [*Taps his reast pocket.*] I have it here.

BAS. You'll deliver it as soon as ou can—when you see she's disen-aged, you understand.

ASL. I understand. [*Calls.*] Come, ow, the glasses are filled.

BAS. You shan't do it for nothing, promise you.

ASL. All right, all right. [*To the ervant.*] A lemon, Karen—quick as e wind!

[BASTIAN *retires.*]

STEN. A word, Aslaksen; shall you e passing here tomorrow evening?

ASL. Tomorrow evening? I can, if ou like.

STEN. Then you might look in and ve Madam Rundholmen this letter.

ASL. From you?

STEN. Yes. Put it in your pocket. here now. Tomorrow evening, then?

ASL. All right; trust to me.

[*The servant brings the lemon;* TENSGARD *goes towards the window.*]

BAS. Well—have you spoken to Madam Rundholmen?

STEN. Spoken? Oh yes, I said a word or two—

BAS. And what do you think?

STEN. Oh—well—we were interrupted. I can't say anything definite.

BAS. I'll take my chance all the same; she's always complaining of her loneliness. My fate shall be sealed within an hour.

STEN. Within an hour?

BAS. [*Sees* MADAM RUNDHOLMEN *who enters from the left*]. Sh! Not a word to anyone!

[*Goes towards the back.*]

STEN. [*whispers to* ASLAKSEN]. Give me back the letter.

ASL. Do you want it back?

STEN. Yes, at once; I will deliver it myself.

ASL. Very well; here it is.

[STENSGARD *thrusts the letter into his pockets and mixes with the rest.*]

MADAM [*to* BASTIAN]. What do you say to the election, Mr. Bastian?

BAS. I'm delighted. Stensgard and I are bosom friends, you know. I shouldn't much be surprised if he got into Parliament.

MADAM. But your father wouldn't much like that.

BAS. Oh, father has so many irons in the fire. Besides, if Stensgard's elected, it will still be all in the family, I daresay.

MADAM. How so?

BAS. He wants to marry—

MADAM. Lord! Has he said anything?

BAS. Yes; and I've promised to put in a word for him. It'll be all right. I'm sure Ragna likes him.

MADAM. Ragna!

LUN. [*approaching*]. What is interesting you so deeply, Madam Rundholmen?

MADAM. What do you think he says? Why, that Mr. Stensgard's making up to—

LUN. Yes, but he won't find the Chamberlain so easy to deal with.

BAS. The Chamberlain?

LUN. He probably thinks her too good a match for a mere lawyer—

MADAM. Who? Who?

LUN. Why, his daughter, Miss Bratsberg, of course.

BAS. He's surely not making love to Miss Bratsberg?

LUN. Yes, indeed he is.

MADAM. You are quite sure of that?

BAS. And he told me—! Oh, I want to say a word to you.

[LUNDESTAD *and* BASTIAN *go towards the back.*]

MADAM [*approaching* STENSGARD.] You must be on your guard, Mr. Stensgard.

STEN. Against whom?

MADAM. Against malicious people who are slandering you.

STEN. Why, let them—so long as one person doesn't believe their slanders.

MADAM. And who may that one person be?

STEN. [*slips the letter into her hand.*] Take this; read it when you are alone.

MADAM. Ah, I knew it!

[*Goes off to the left*].

RIN. [*enters from the right*]. Well, I hear you have won a brilliant victory, Mr. Stensgard.

STEN. Yes, I have, Mr. Ringdal, in spite of your noble chief's endeavours.

RIN. His endeavours? What to do?

STEN. To keep me out.

RIN. Like other people, he has a right to vote as he pleases.

STEN. It's a pity he is not likely to retain that right for long.

RIN. What do you mean?

STEN. I mean, since his affairs are not so straight as they might be—

RIN. His affairs! What affairs! What have you got into your head?

STEN. Oh, you needn't pretend ignorance. Isn't there a storm brewing?—a great crash impending?

RIN. Yes, so I hear on all sides.

STEN. And aren't both the Bratsbergs involved in it?

RIN. My dear sir, are you crazy?

STEN. Oh, you naturally want to keep it dark.

RIN. What good would that be? That sort of thing can't be kept dark.

STEN. Is it not true then?

RIN. Not a word of it so far as the Chamberlain is concerned. How could you believe such nonsense? Who has been humbugging you?

STEN. I won't tell you just yet.

RIN. Well, you needn't; but whoever it was must have had a motive.

STEN. A motive—?

RIN. Yes, just think: is there no one who has an interest in keeping you and the Chamberlain apart?

STEN. Yes, on my soul, but there is though!

RIN. The Chamberlain in reality thinks very highly of you—

STEN. Does he?

RIN. Yes, and that's why people want to make mischief between you. They reckon on your ignorance of the situation, on your impulsiveness and your confiding disposition—

STEN. Oh, the vipers! And Madam Rundholmen has my letter!

RIN. What letter?

STEN. Oh, nothing. But it's not too late. My dear Mr. Ringdal, shall you see the Chamberlain this evening?

RIN. In all probability.

STEN. Then tell him to think no more of those threats — he will understand; tell him I shall call tomorrow and explain everything.

RIN. You'll call?

STEN. Yes, to prove to him—Ah, a proof! Look here, Mr. Ringdal; will you give the Chamberlain this bill from me?

RIN. This bill—?

STEN. Yes; it's a matter I can't explain to you; but just you give it to him—

RIN. Upon my word, Mr. Stensgard—

STEN. And just add these words from me: This is how I treat those who vote against me!

RIN. I shan't forget. [*Goes out the back.*]

STEN. I say, Mr. Heire—how could you go and palm off that story about the Chamberlain upon me?

HEIRE. How could I palm it off on you—?

STEN. Yes—it's a lie from beginning to end.

HEIRE. No! Is it indeed? I'm delighted to hear it. Do you hear, Mr. Lundestad? It's all a lie about the Chamberlain.

LUN. Sh! We were on a false scent; it's nearer at hand.

STEN. How nearer at hand?

LUN. I know nothing for certain; but they talk of Madam Rundholmen—

STEN. What!

HEIRE. Haven't I prophesied it! She has been too much mixed up with our friend at Stonelee—

LUN. He drove off this morning before daylight—

HEIRE. And his family is out hunting for him—

LUN. And the son has been doing all he knows to get his sister provided for—

STEN. Provided for! "Tomorrow" she said; and then her anxiety about her father—!

HEIRE. Hee-hee! You'll see he's gone and hanged himself, sir!

ASL. Has anyone hanged himself?

LUN. Mr. Heire says Monsen of Stonelee—

MON. [*enters from the back*]. A dozen of champagne!

ASL. AND OTHERS. Monsen!

MON. Yes, Monsen! Champagne-Monsen! Money-Monsen! Let's have the wine, confound it all!

HEIRE. But, my dear sir—

STEN. Why, where have you dropped from?

MON. I've been doing a stroke of business sir! Cleared a hundred thousand! Hei! Tomorrow I'll give a thundering dinner at Stonelee. I invite you all. Champagne, I say! I congratulate you, Stensgard! I hear you're elected.

STEN. Yes; I must explain to you—

MON. Pooh; what does it matter to me? Wine, I say! Where is Madam Rundholmen?

[*Makes a motion to go out to the left.*]

MAID-SERVANT [*who has just entered, intercepts him*]. No one can see the mistress just now; she's got a letter—

BAS. Oh, damn it all!

[*Goes out by the back.*]

STEN. Is she reading it?

SERVANT. Yes, and it seems quite to have upset her.

STEN. Good-bye, Mr. Monsen; dinner at Stonlee tomorrow—?

MON. Yes, tomorrow. Good-bye!

STEN. [*whispers*]. Mr. Heire, will you do me a service?

HEIRE. Certainly, certainly.

STEN. Then just run me down a little to Madam Rundholmen; indulge in an innuendo or two at my expense. You are so good at that sort of thing.

HEIRE. What the deuce is the meaning of this?

STEN. I have my reasons. It's a joke, you know—a wager with—with some one you have a grudge against.

HEIRE. Aha, I understand. I say no more!

STEN. Don't go too far, you know. Just place me in a more or less equivocal light—make her a little suspicious of me, for the moment.

HEIRE. Rely upon me; it will be a real pleasure to me.

STEN. Thanks, thanks in advance. [*Goes towards the table.*] Mr. Lundestad, we shall meet tomorrow forenoon at the Chamberlain's.

LUN. Have you hopes?

STEN. A three-fold hope.

LUN. Three-fold? I don't understand—

STEN. You needn't. Henceforth, I will be my own counsellor. [*Goes out by the back.*]

MON. [*at the punch-bowl.*] Another glass, Aslaksen! Where's Bastian?

ASL. He's just gone out. But I have a letter to deliver for him.

MON. Have you?

ASL. To Madam Rundholmen.

MON. Ah, at last!

ASL. But not till to-morrow evening, he said; tomorrow evening, neither sooner nor later. Here's to you!

HEIRE. [*to* LUNDESTAD]. What the deuce is all this business between Stensgard and Madam Rundholmen?

LUN. [*whispers*]. He's courting her.

HEIRE. I suspected as much! But he asked me to run him down a bit—to cast a slur on his character—

LUN. And you said you would?

HEIRE. Yes, of course.

LUN. I believe he says of you that your word is as good as your bond—and no better.

HEIRE. Hee-hee—the dear fellow! He shall find out his mistake this time.

MADAM. [*with an open letter in her hand, at the door on the left*]. Where is Mr. Stensgard?

HEIRE. He kissed your chambermaid and went, Madam Rundholmen!

ACT V

SCENE—*Large reception-room at the* CHAMBERLAIN'S. *Entrance door at the back. Doors right and left.*

RINGDAL *stands at a table looking through some papers. A knock.*

RIN. Come in.

FIEL. [*from the back*]. Good morning.

RIN. Good-morning, Doctor.

FIEL. All well, eh?

RIN. Oh, yes, well enough; but—

FIEL. What?

RIN. Of course you've heard the great news?

FIEL. No. What is it?

RIN. Do you mean to say you haven't heard what has happened at Stonelee?

FIEL. No.

RIN. Monsen has absconded.

FIEL. Absconded! Monsen?

RIN. Absconded.

FIEL. Great heavens—!

RIN. There were ugly rumours yesterday; but then Monsen turned up again; he managed to throw dust in people's eyes—

FIEL. But the reason? The reason?

RIN. Enormous losses in timber, they say. Several houses in Christiania have stopped payment, and so—

FIEL. And so he has gone off!

RIN. To Sweden, probably. The authorities took possession at Stonelee this morning. Things are being inventoried and sealed up—

FIEL. And the unfortunate children—?

RIN. The son seems to have kept clear of the business: at least I hear he puts a bold face on it.

FIEL. But the daughter?

RIN. Sh! The daughter is here.

FIEL. Here?

RIN. The tutor brought her and the two little ones here this morning. Miss Bratsberg is looking after them, quietly you know.

FIEL. And how does she bear it?

RIN. Oh, pretty well, I fancy. You may guess, after the treatment she has met with at home—And, besides, I may tell you she is— Ah, here's the Chamberlain.

CHAM. [*from the left*]. So you are here, my dear Doctor?

FIEL. Yes, I am pretty early astir. Let me wish you many happy returns of the day, Chamberlain.

CHAM. Oh, as for happiness—! But thank you, all the same; I know you mean it kindly.

FIEL. And may I ask, Chamberlain—?

CHAM. One word: be good enough to drop that title.

FIEL. What do you mean?

CHAM. I am an ironmaster, and nothing more.

FIEL. Why, what strange notion is this?

CHAM. I have renounced my post and my title. I am sending in my resignation to-day.

FIEL. You should sleep upon that.

CHAM. When his Majesty was graciously pleased to assign me a place in his immediate circle, he did so because of the unblemished honour of my family through long generations.

FIEL. Well, what then?

CHAM. My family is disgraced, just as much as Mr. Monsen's. Of course, you have heard about Monsen?

FIEL. Yes, I have.

CHAM. [*to* RINGDAL]. Any further news about him?

RIN. Only that he brings down with him a good many of the younger men.

CHAM. And my son?

RIN. Your son has sent me his balance sheet. He will be able to pay in full; but there will be nothing over.

CHAM. H'm. Then will you get my resignation copied?

RIN. I'll see to it.

[*Goes out by the foremost door on the right*].

FIEL. Have you reflected what you are doing? Things can be arranged without anyone being a bit the wiser.

CHAM. Indeed! Can I make myself ignorant of what has happened?

FIEL. Oh, after all, what has happened? Has not he written to you, acknowledged his fault, and begged for

your forgiveness? This is the only time he has done anything of the sort; why not simply blot it out?

CHAM. Would you do what my son has done?

FIEL. He won't repeat it; that is the main point.

CHAM. How do you know he will not repeat it?

FIEL. If for no other reason, because of what you yourself told me—the scene with your daughter-in-law. Whatever else comes of it, that will steady him.

CHAM. [*pacing the room*]. My poor Selma! Our peace and happiness gone!

FIEL. There are higher things than peace and happiness. Your happiness has been an illusion. Yes, I must speak frankly to you: in that, as in many other things, you have built on a hollow foundation. You have been short-sighted and over-weening, Chamberlain!

CHAM. [*stops short.*] I?

FIEL. Yes, you! You have plumed yourself on your family honour; but when has that honour been tried? Are you sure it would have stood the test?

CHAM. You can spare your sermons, Doctor. Do you think I have not learnt a lesson from the events of these days?

FIEL. I daresay you have; but prove it by showing greater tolerance and clearer insight. You reproach your son: but what have you done for him? You have taken care to develop his faculties, but not to form his character. You have lectured him on what he owed to the honour of his family; but you have not guided and molded him so that honour became to him an irresistible instinct.

CHAM. Do you think so?

FIEL. I not only think, I know it. But that is generally the way here: people are bent on learning, not on living. And you see what comes of it; you see hundreds of men with great gifts, who never seem to be more than half ripe; who are one thing in their ideas and feeling, and something quite different in their habits and acts. Just look at Stensgard—

CHAM. Ah, Stensgard now! What do you make of Stensgard?

FIEL. A patchwork. I have known him from childhood. His father was a mere rag of a man, a withered weed, a nobody. He kept a little huckster's shop, and eked things out with pawnbroking; or rather his wife did it for him. She was a coarse-grained woman, the most unwomanly I ever knew. She had her husband declared incapable; she had not an ounce of heart in her. And in that home Stensgard passed his childhood. Then he went to the grammar-school. "He shall go to college," said his mother; I'll make a smart solicitor of him." Squalor at home, high-pressure at school; soul, temperament, will, talents, all pulling in different ways—what could it lead to but disintegration of character?

CHAM. What could it lead to, eh? I should like to know what is good enough for you. We are to expect nothing of Stensgard; nothing of my son; but we may look to you, I suppose—to you—?

FIEL. Yes, to me—precisely. Oh, you needn't laugh; I take no credit to myself; but my lot has been one that begets equilibrium and firmness of character. I was brought up amid the peace and harmony of a modest mid-

dle-class home. My mother is a woman of the finest type; in our home we had no desires that outstripped our opportunities, no cravings that were wrecked on the rocks of circumstance; and death did not break in upon our circle, leaving emptiness and longing behind it. We were brought up in the love of beauty, but it informed our whole view of life instead of being a side-interest, a thing apart. We were taught to shun excesses, whether of the intellect or of the feelings—

CHAM. Bless me? So that accounts for your being the pink of perfection?

FIEL. I am far from thinking so. I only say that fate had been infinitely kind to me, and that I regard its favours in the light of obligations.

CHAM. Very well; but if Stensgard is under no such obligations, it is all the more to his credit that he—

FIEL. What? What is to his credit?

CHAM. You have misjudged him, my good Doctor. Look here. What do you say to this?

FIEL. Your son's bill!

CHAM. Yes; he has sent it to me.

FIEL. Of his own accord?

CHAM. Of his own accord and unconditionally. It is fine: it is noble. From this day forth, my house is open to him.

FIEL. Think again? For your own sake, for your daughter's—

CHAM. Oh, let me alone! He is better than you in many ways. At any rate he is straightforward, while you are underhand in your dealings.

FIEL. I?

CHAM. Yes, you! You have made yourself the master of this house; you come and go as you please; I consult you about everything—and yet—

FIEL. Well?—And yet?

CHAM. And yet there's always something confoundedly close about you; yes, and something—something uppish that I cannot endure!

FIEL. Please explain yourself!

CHAM. I? No, it is you that ought to explain yourself! But now you must take the consequences.

FIEL. We don't understand each other, Chamberlain. I have no bill to give up to you; yet, who knows but I may be making greater sacrifice for your sake?

CHAM. Indeed? How so?

FIEL. By holding my tongue.

CHAM. Holding your tongue, indeed! Shall I tell you what I am tempted to do? To forget my manners, use bad language, and join the League of Youth. You are a stiff necked Pharisee, my good Doctor; and that sort of thing is out of place in our free society. Look at Stensgard; he is not like that; so he shall come here whenever he likes; he shall—he shall—! Oh, what's the use of talking—! You must take the consequences; as you make your bed, so you must lie.

LUN. [*enters from the back*]. My congratulations, Chamberlain! May you long enjoy the respect and—

CHAM. Oh, go to the devil—I'm almost inclined to say! That's all humbug, my dear Lundestad. There's nothing but humbug in this world.

LUN. That is what Mr. Monsen's creditors are saying.

CHAM. Ah, about Monsen—didn't it come upon you like a thunder bolt?

LUN. Oh, you have often prophesied it, Chamberlain.

CHAM. H'm, h'm;—yes, to be sure I have. I prophesied it only the day before yesterday; he came here trying to get money out of me—

FIEL. It might have saved him.

LUN. Impossible; he was too deep in the mire; and whatever is, is for the best.

CHAM. That is your opinion? Was it the best then, that you were beaten at the poll yesterday?

LUN. I wasn't beaten; everything went just as I wanted. Stensgard is not a man to make an enemy of; he has got what we others have to whistle for.

CHAM. I don't quite understand what you mean—?

LUN. He has the power of carrying people away with him. And then he has the luck to be unhampered by either character, or conviction, or social position; so that Liberalism is the easiest thing in the world for him.

CHAM. Well, really, I should have thought we were all Liberals.

LUN. Yes, of course we are Liberals, Chamberlain; not a doubt of it. But the thing is that we are Liberal only on our own behalf, whereas Stensgard's Liberalism extends to other people. That's the novelty of the thing.

CHAM. And you are going over to these subversive ideas?

LUN. I've read in old story-books about people who could summon up old spirits, but could not lay them again.

CHAM. Why, my dear Lundestad, how can a man of your enlightment—?

LUN. I know it's mere popish superstition, Chamberlain. But new ideas are like those spirits; it's not so easy to lay them; the best plan is to compromise with them as best you can.

CHAM. But now that Monsen has fallen, and no doubt his crew of agitators with him—

LUN. If Monsen's fall had come two or three days ago, things would have been very different.

CHAM. Yes, unfortunately. You have been too hasty.

LUN. Partly out of consideration for you, Chamberlain.

CHAM. For me?

LUN. Our party must keep up it's reputation in the eyes of the people. We represent the old, deep-rooted Norse sense of honour. If I had deserted Stensgard, you know he holds a paper—

CHAM. Not now.

LUN. What?

CHAM. Here it is.

LUN. He has given it up to you?

CHAM. Yes. Personally, he is a gentleman; so much I must say for him.

LUN. [*thoughtfully.*] Mr. Stensgard has rare abilities.

STEN. [*at the back, standing in the doorway*]. May I come in?

CHAM. [*going to meet him*]. I am delighted to see you.

STEN. And will you accept my congratulations?

CHAM. With all my heart.

STEN. Then with all my heart I wish you happiness! And you must forget all the stupid things I have written.

CHAM. I go by deeds, not words Mr. Stensgard.

STEN. How good of you to say so.

CHAM. And henceforth—since you wish it—you must consider yourself at home here.

STEN. May I? May I really?

[*A knock at the door.*]

[*Several* LEADING MEN *of the neighborhood.* TOWN COUNCILLORS, *etc., enter.* THE CHAMBERLAIN *goes to receive them, accepts their congratulations, and converses with them.*]

THORA. [*who has meantime entered by the second door on the left*]. Mr. Stensgard, let me thank you.

STEN. You, Miss Bratsberg!

THORA. My father has told me how nobly you have acted.

STEN. But—?

THORA. Oh, how we have misjudged you!

STEN. Have you—?

THORA. It was your own fault—No, no; it was ours. Oh, what would I not do to atone for our error.

STEN. Would you? You yourself? Would you really?—

THORA. All of us would; if we only knew—

CHAM. Refreshments for these gentlemen, my child.

THORA. They are just coming.

[*She retires towards the door again where a* SERVANT *at the same moment appears with cake and wine, which are handed around.*]

STEN. Oh, my dear Lundestad! I feel like a conquering god.

LUN. So you must have felt yesterday, I suppose.

STEN. Pooh! This is something quite different; the final triumph; the crown of all! There is a glory, a halo, over my life.

LUN. Oho; dreams of love!

STEN. Not dreams! Realities, glorious realities!

LUN. So Brother Bastian has brought you the answer?

STEN. Bastian—?

LUN. Yes, he gave me a hint yesterday; he had promised to plead your cause with a certain young lady.

STEN. Oh, what nonsense—

LUN. Why make a mystery of it? If you haven't heard already, I can give you the news. You have won the day, Mr. Stensgard; I have it from Ringdal.

STEN. What have you from Ringdal?

LUN. Miss Monsen has accepted you.

STEN. What!

LUN. Accepted you, I say.

STEN. Accepted me! And the father has bolted!

LUN. But the daughter hasn't.

STEN. Accepted me! In the midst of all this family trouble! How unwomanly! How repellant to any man with the least delicacy of feeling! But the whole thing is a misunderstanding. I never commissioned Bastian— How could that idiot—? However, it doesn't matter to me; he must answer for his follies himself.

HEIRE. [*enters from the back*]. Hee-hee! Quite a gathering! Of course, of course! We are paying our respects, propitiating the powers that be, as the saying goes. May I, too—

CHAM. Thanks, thanks, old friend!

HEIRE. Oh, I protest, my dear sir? That is too much condescension. [*New* GUESTS *arrive.*] Ah, here we have the myrmidons of justice—the executive—I say no more [*Goes over to* STENSGARD.] Ah, my dear fortunate youth, are you here? Your hand! Accept the assurance of an old man's rejoicing.

STEN. At what?

HEIRE. You asked me yesterday to run you down a little to her—you know—

STEN. Yes, yes; what then?

HEIRE. It was a heartfelt pleasure to me to oblige you—

STEN. Well—and what happened then? How did she take it?

HEIRE. Like a loving woman, of course—burst into tears; locked herself into her room; and would neither answer nor show herself—

STEN. Ah, thank goodness!

HEIRE. It's barbarous to subject a widow's heart to such cruel tests, to go and gloat over her jealous agonies! But love has cat's eyes—I say no more! For to-day as I drove past, there stood Madam Rundholmen, brisk and buxom at her open window, combing her hair. She looked like a mermaid, if you'll allow me to say so. Oh, she's a fine woman!

STEN. Well, and then?

HEIRE. Why, she laughed like one possessed, sir, and waved a letter in the air, and called out "A proposal, Mr. Heire! I'm engaged to be married."

STEN. What! Engaged?

HEIRE. My hearty congratulations, young man; I'm inexpressibly pleased to be the first to announce to you—

STEN. It's all rubbish! It's nonsense!

HEIRE. What is nonsense?

STEN. You have misunderstood her; or else she has misunderstood—Engaged! Preposterous! Now that Monsen's down, she'll probably—

HEIRE. Not at all, sir, not at all! Madam Rundholmen has solid legs to stand on.

STEN. No matter! I have quite other intentions. All that about the letter was only a joke—a wager, as I told you. My dear Mr. Heire, do oblige me by not saying a word to anyone of this silly affair.

HEIRE. I see, I see! It's to be kept secret; it's to be a romance. Ah, youth, youth; it's nothing if not poetical.

STEN. Yes, yes; mum's the word. You shan't regret it— I'll take up your cases—Sh! I rely upon you.

[*He retires.*]

CHAM. [*Who has meanwhile been talking to* LUNDESTAD.] No, Lundestad —that I really cannot believe!

LUN. I assure you, Chamberlain—Daniel Heire told me so himself.

HEIRE. What did I tell you, may I inquire?

CHAM. Did Mr. Stensgard show you a bill yesterday?

HEIRE. Yes, by-the-bye—! What on earth was the meaning of all that?

CHAM. I'll tell you afterwards. And you told him it was a forgery?

HEIRE. Pooh, a mere innocent jest.

LUN. And you told him both signatures were forged?

HEIRE. Oh, yes; why not both while I was about it?

CHAM. So that was it!

LUN. [*to the* CHAMBERLAIN]. And when he heard that—

CHAM. He gave the bill to Ringdal!

LUN. The bill that was useless as a weapon of offence.

CHAM. He shams magnanimity! Makes a fool of me a second time! Gains admission to my house, and makes me welcome him and thank him —this—this—!

HEIRE. Why, what are you going on about, my dear sir?

CHAM. I'll tell you all about it afterwards. [*Takes* LUNDESTAD *apart*]. And this is the fellow you protect, push forward, help to rise!

LUN. Well, he took you in, too!

CHAM. Oh, I should like to—!

LUN. [*pointing to* STENSGARD, *who s speaking to* THORA]. Look there! What will people be fancying!

CHAM. I shall soon put a stop to hese fancies.

LUN. Too late, Chamberlain; he'll vorm himself forward by dint of pro-ıises—

CHAM. I, too, can manoeuvre.

LUN. What will you do?

CHAM. [*Goes over to* FIELDBO.] Doctor Fieldbo, will you do me a ser-ice?

FIEL. With pleasure.

CHAM. Then turn that fellow out f my house.

FIEL. Stensgard?

CHAM. Yes, the adventurer; I hate is very name; turn him out!

FIEL. But how can I—?

CHAM. I give you a free hand.

FIEL. A free hand! Do you mean ?

CHAM. Yes, yes, by all means.

FIEL. Your hand on it Chamber-ın!

CHAM. Here it is.

FIEL. So be it, then; now or never! *Loudly.*] May I request the attention the company for a moment?

CHAM. Silence for Doctor Fieldbo!

FIEL. With Chamberlain Brats-erg's consent, I have the pleasure of nnouncing my engagement to his aughter.

[*An outburst of astonishment.* THO- *utters a slight scream. The* CHAM-ERLAIN *is on the point of speaking, t refrains. Loud talk and congratu-tions.*

STEN. Engagement!

HEIRE. With the Chamberlain's ? With your— What does it mean?

LUN. Is the Doctor out of his mind?

STEN. But Chamberlain—?

CHAM. What can I do? I am a Liberal. I join the League of Youth!

FIEL. Thanks, thanks—and forgive me!

CHAM. Associations are the order of the day, Mr. Stensgard.

THORA. Oh, my dear father!

LUN. Yes, and engagements are the order of the day. I have another to announce.

STEN. A mere invention!

LUN. No, not a bit of it; Miss Monsen is engaged to—

STEN. False, false, I say!

THORA. No, father, it's true; they are both here.

CHAM. Who? Where?

THORA. Ragna and Mr. Helle.

[*Goes towards the second door on the right*].

LUN. Mr. Helle! Then it's he—!

CHAM. Here? [*Goes toward the door.*] Come in, my dear child.

RAGNA. [*shrinking back shyly.*] Oh, no, no; there are so many people.

CHAM. Dont be bashful; you couldn't help what has happened.

HELLE. She is homeless now, Chamberlain.

RAGNA. Oh, you must help us!

CHAM. I will, indeed; and thank you for giving me the opportunity.

HEIRE. You may well say engagements are the order of the day. I have another.

CHAM. What? You? At your age? —How rash of you!

HEIRE. Oh—! I say no more.

LUN. The game is up, Mr. Stensgard.

STEN. Indeed! [*Loudly.*] I have

one to add to the list, Mr. Heire! I, too, have cast anchor for life.

CHAM. What?

STEN. One is now and then forced to play a double game to conceal one's true intentions. I regard this as permissible when the general weal is at stake. My lifework lies clear before me, and is all in all to me. I consecrate my whole energies to this district; I find here a ferment of ideas which I must strive to clarify. But this task cannot be accomplished by a mere adventurer. The men of the district must gather round one of themselves. Therefore I have determined to unite my interests indissolubly with yours—to unite them by a bond of affection. If I have awakened any false hopes I must plead for forgiveness. I too am engaged.

CHAM. You?

FIEL. Engaged?

HEIRE. I can bear witness.

CHAM. But how—?

FIEL. Engaged? To whom?

LUN. It surely can't be—?

STEN. Yes, my fellow citizen's, I am engaged to Madam Rundholmen!

FIEL. To Madam Rundholmen!

CHAM. The storekeeper's widow!

LUN. H'm. Indeed!

CHAM. How could you—?

STEN. A manœvre, Mr. Bratsberg!

LUN. He has rare abilities!

ASL. [*looks in at the door, back*]. I humbly beg pardon—

CHAM. Oh, come in, Aslaksen! A visit of congratulation, eh?

ASL. Oh, not at all. But I have something very important to say to Mr. Stensgard.

STEN. Another time; you can wait.

ASL. No, I must tell you—

STEN. Hold your tongue! What intrusiveness is this?—Yes, gentlemen, strange are the ways of destiny. The district and I required a bond that should bind us firmly together; and I found on my path a woman of ripened character who could make a home for me. I have put off the adventurer, gentlemen, and here I stand in your midst as one of yourselves. Take me: I am ready to stand or fall in any post your confidence may assign me.

LUN. You have won.

CHAM. Well, really, I must say—[*To the* MAID, *who has entered from the back.*] What are you giggling about?

THE SERVANT. Madam Rundholmen—?

THE COMPANY. Madam Rundholmen?

CHAM. What about her?

THE SERVANT. Madam Rundholmen is waiting outside with her young man—

THE COMPANY [*to each other*]. Her young man? Madam Rundholmen! How's this?

STEN. What nonsense!

ASL. Yes, I was just telling you—

CHAM. [*at the door*]. Come along! [BASTIAN, MONSEN, *with* MADAM RUNDHOLMEN *on his arm, enters from the back. A general movement.*]

MADAM. I hope I am not intruding, sir—

CHAM. Not at all, not at all.

MADAM. But I couldn't resist bringing up my young man to show him to you and Miss Bratsberg.

CHAM. Yes, I hear you are engaged; but—

THORA. We didn't know—

STEN. [*to* ASLAKSEN]. How is all his—?

ASL. I had so much in my head yesterday; so much to think about, I mean—

STEN. But I gave her my letter, and—

ASL. No, you gave her Bastian Monsen's; here is yours.

STEN. Bastian's? And here—? [*Glances at the address, crumples the letter together, and crams it into his pocket.*] Oh, curse you for a blunderer!

MADAM. Of course I was willing enough. There's no trusting the menfolk, I know; but when you have it in black and white that their intentions are honourable— Why, there's Mr. Stensgard, I declare. Well, Mr. Stensgard, won't you congratulate me?

HEIRE. [*to* LUNDESTAD]. How hungrily she glares at him.

CHAM. Of course he will, Madam Lundholmen; but won't you congratulate your sister-in-law to be?

MADAM. Who?

THORA. Ragna; she is engaged, too.

BAS. Are you, Ragna?

MADAM. Indeed? Yes, Bastian told me there was something in the wind. I wish you both joy; and welcome into the family, Mr. Stensgard!

FIEL. No, no; not Stensgard!

CHAM. No, it's Mr. Helle. And you may congratulate my daughter, too.

MADAM. Ah, so Lundestad was right after all. I congratulate you, Miss Thora; and you, too, Mr. Stensgard.

FIEL. You mean Dr. Fieldbo.

MADAM. What?

FIEL. I am the happy man.

MADAM. Well, now, I don't in the least know where I am.

CHAM. And we have just found out where we are.

STEN. I have an appointment—

CHAM. [*aside*]. Lundestad, what was the other word?

LUN. What other?

CHAM. Not adventurer, but the other—?

LUN. Demagogue.

STEN. I take my leave.

CHAM. One word—only one word, Mr. Stensgard—a word which has long been on the tip of my tongue.

STEN. [*at the door*]. Excuse me; I'm in a hurry.

CHAM. [*following him*]. Demagogue!

STEN. Good-bye; good-bye!

[*Goes out by the back.*]

CHAM. [*coming forward again.*] Now the air is pure again, my friends.

BAS. I hope you don't blame me, sir, for what has happened at home?

CHAM. Every one must bear his own burden.

BAS. I had really no part in it.

SEL. [*who during the preceeding scene, has been listening at the second door on the right.*] Father! May he come now?

CHAM. Selma! You plead for him? After what happened two days ago—

SEL. Oh, two days are a long time. I know now that he can go astray—

CHAM. And that pleases you?

SEL. Yes, that he can; but in future I won't let him.

CHAM. Bring him in then.

[SELMA *goes out again to the right.*]

RIN. [*enters by the foremost door on the right*]. Here is your resignation.

CHAM. You can tear it up.

RIN. Tear it up?

CHAM. Yes, Ringdal; I have found

another way. I can make atonement without that; I shall set to work in earnest—

ERIK. [*enters with* SELMA *from the right*]. Can you forgive me?

CHAM. [*hands him the bill*]. I can not be less merciful than fate.

ERIK. Father! I shall retire this very day from the business you dislike so much.

CHAM. No, indeed; you must stick to it. But I will stand at your side. [*Loudly.*] News for you, gentlemen! I have entered into partnership with my son.

SEVERAL GENTLEMEN. You, Chamberlain?

HEIRE. You, my dear sir?

CHAM. Yes, it is a useful and honourable calling; or at any rate it can be made so.

LUN. Well, I'll tell you what, Chamberlain—since you are going to set to work for the good of the district, it would be a shame and disgrace if an old soldier like me were to sulk in his tent.

ERIK. Ah, what is this?

LUN. I cannot in fact. After the disappointments in love that have befallen Mr. Stensgard today, Heaven forbid we should force the poor fellow into the political mill. He must rest and recover; a change of air is what he wants and I shall see that he gets it.

THE GENTLEMEN [*shaking hands with him enthusiastically.*] Thanks, Lundestad! That's a good fellow! You won't fail us!

CHAM. Now, this is as it should be; things are settling down again. But whom have we to thank for all this?

FIEL. Come, Aslaksen, you can explain—?

ASL. [*alarmed*]. I, Doctor?

FIEL. What about that letter, then —?

ASL. It wasn't my fault, I tell you! It was the election and Bastian Monsen, and chance and destiny, and Madam Rundholmen's punch — and there was I, with the whole responsibility of the press upon me—

CHAM. [*approaching*]. What? What's that?

ASL. The press, sir?

CHAM. The press! That's just it! Haven't I always said that the press has marvellous influence these days?

ASL. Oh, Chamberlain—

CHAM. No false modesty, Mr. Aslaksen! I haven't hitherto been in the habit of reading your paper, but henceforth I will. I shall subscribe for ten copies.

ASL. Oh, you can have twenty, Chamberlain!

CHAM. Very well, then; let me have twenty. And if you need money, come to me; I mean to support the press.

RIN. What's this I hear? Your daughter engaged?

CHAM. Yes, what do you say to that?

RIN. I am delighted! But when was it arranged?

FIEL. [*quickly*]. I'll tell you later.

CHAM. Why, it was arranged on the Seventeenth of May.

FIEL. What?

CHAM. The day little Miss Ragna was here.

THORA. Father, father; did you know —?

CHAM. Yes, my dear; I have known ll along.

FIEL. Oh, Chamberlain—!

THORA. Who can have—?

CHAM. Another time I should adise you young ladies not to talk so oud when I am taking my siesta in the ay window.

THORA. You were behind the curains?

FIEL. Now, I understand!

CHAM. Yes, you are the one to eep your own counsel—

FIEL. Would it have been of any se for me to speak earlier?

CHAM. You are right, Fieldbo. hese days have taught me a lesson.

THORA. [*aside to* FIELDBO]. Yes, you an keep your own counsel. All this out Mr. Stensgard—why did you tell e nothing?

FIEL. When a hawk is hovering er the dove-cote, one watches and ields his little dove—one does not arm her.

[*They are interrupted by* MADAM UNDHOLMEN.]

HEIRE. [*to the* CHAMBERLAIN]. am sorry to tell you, Chamberlain, at the settlement of our little legal fferences will have to be adjourned definitely.

CHAM. Indeed; why so?

HEIRE. You must know I've acpted a post as society editor on Asksen's paper.

CHAM. I am glad to hear it.

HEIRE. And of course you'll unrstand—with so much business on nd—

MADAM. [*to* THORA.] Yes, I can ll you he's cost me many a tear, that bad man. But now I thank the Lord for Bastian. The other was false as the sea-foam; and then he's a terrible smoker, Miss Bratsberg, and frightfully particular about his meals.

A SERVANT. [*enters from the left.*] Dinner is on the table.

CHAM. Come along, then, all of you. Mr. Lundestad, you shall sit beside me; and you too, Mr. Aslaksen.

RIN. We shall have a lot of toasts to drink after dinner.

HEIRE. Yes; and perhaps an old man may be allowed to put in a claim for the toast of "Absent Friends."

LUN. One absent friend will return, Mr. Heire.

HEIRE. Stensgard?

LUN. Yes; you'll see, gentlemen! In ten or fifteen years, Stensgard will either be in Parliament or in the Ministry—perhaps in both at once.

FIEL. In ten or fifteen years? Perhaps; but then he can scarcely stand at the head of the League of Youth.

HEIRE. Why not?

FIEL. Why, because by that time his youth will be—questionable.

HEIRE. Then he can stand at the head of the Questionable League, sir. That's what Lundestad means. He says like Napoleon—"It's the questionable people that make politicians"; hee-hee!

FIEL. Well, after all is said and done, our League shall last through young days and questionable days as well; and it shall continue to be the League of Youth. When Stensgard founded his League, and was carried shoulder high amid all the enthusiasm of Independence Day, he said—"Providence is on the side of the League of

Youth." I think even Mr. Helle, theologian as he is, will let us apply that saying to ourselves.

CHAM. I think so too, my friends; for truly we have been groping and stumbling in darkness; but good angels guided us.

LUN. Oh, for that matter, I think the angels were only middling.

ASL. Yes; that comes of the local situation, Mr. Lundestad.

Volume VI

The Wild Duck

PERSONS OF THE PLAY

ERLE, a merchant.

REGERS WERLE, *his son.*

LD EKDAL.

IALMAR EKDAL, *his son, a photographer.*

INA EKDAL, *Hialmar's wife.*

EDVIG, *their daughter, a girl of fourteen.*

RS. SORBY. *Werle's housekeeper.*

ELLING, *a doctor.*

OLVIK, *a student of theology.*

RABERG, *Werle's bookkeeper.*

ETTERSON, *Werle's servant.*

NSON, *a hired waiter.*

FLABBY GENTLEMAN.

THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN.

SHORT-SIGHTED GENTLEMAN.

X OTHER GENTLEMEN, *guests at Werle's dinner-party*

VERAL HIRED WAITERS.

The action takes place in the home Werle and the studio of Hialmar dal.

ACT I

SCENE—*At* WERLE'S *house. A richly d comfortably furnished study; okcases and upholstered furniture; writing-table, with papers and documents, in the centre of the room; hted lamps with green shades, giving subdued light. At the back, open ding-doors with curtains drawn back. Within is seen a large and handsome room, brilliantly lighted with lamps and branching candlesticks. In front, on the right (in the study), a small baize door leads into* WERLE'S *office. On the left, in front, a fire-place with a glowing coal fire, and farther back a double door leading into the dining-room.*

WERLE'S *servant,* PETTERSON, *in livery, and* JENSEN, *the hired waiter, in black, are putting the study in order. In the large room two or three other hired waiters are moving about arranging things and lighting more candles. From the dining-room, the hum of conversation and laughter of many voices are heard; a glass is tapped with a knife; silence follows, and a toast is proposed; shouts of "Bravo!" and then again a buzz of conversation.*

PET. [*lights a lamp on the chimney-place and places a shade over it*]. Hark to them, Jensen! now the old man's on his legs holding a long palaver about Mrs. Sorby.

JEN. [*pushing forward an arm-chair*]. Is it true, what folks say, that they're—very good friends, eh?

PET. Lord knows.

JEN. I've heard tell as he's been a lively customer in his day.

PET. May be.

JEN. And he's giving this spread in honour of his son, they say.

PET. Yes. His son came home yesterday.

JEN. This is the first time I ever heard as Mr. Werle had a son.

PET. Oh yes, he has a son, right enough. But he's a fixture, as you might say, up at the Höidal works. He's never once come to town all the years I've been in service here.

A WAITER [*in the doorway of the other room*]. Pettersen, here's an old fellow wanting—

PET. [*mutters*]. The devil—who's this now?

OLD EKDAL *appears from the right, in the inner room. He is dressed in a threadbare overcoat with a high collar; he wears woollen mittens, and carries in his hand a stick and a fur cap. Under his arm, a brown paper parcel. Dirty, red-brown wig and small grey moustache.*

PET. [*goes towards him*]. Good Lord —what do you want here?

EKD. [*in the doorway*]. Must get into the office, Pettersen.

PET. The office was closed an hour ago, and—

EKD. So they told me at the front door. But Graberg's in there still. Let me slip in this way, Petterson; there's a good fellow. [*Points towards the baize door.*] It's not the first time I've come this way.

PET. Well, you may pass. [*Opens the door.*] But mind you go out again the proper way, for we've got company.

EKD. I know, I know—h'm! Thanks, Pettersen, good old friend! Thanks! [*Mutters softly.*] Ass!

[*He goes into the office;* PETTERSEN *shuts the door after him.*

JEN. Is he one of the office people?

PET. No he's only an outside hand that does odd jobs of copying. But he's been a tip-topper in his day, ha old Ekdal.

JEN. You can see he's been through a lot.

PET. Yes; he was an army officer you know.

JEN. You don't say so?

PET. No mistake about it. But then he went into the timber trade or some thing of the sort. They say he once played Mr. Werle a very nasty trick They were partners in the Höida works at the time. Oh, I know old Ekdal well, I do. Many a nip of bit ters and bottle of ale we two hav drunk at Madam Eriksen's.

JEN. He don't look as if he'd muc to stand treat with.

PET. Why, bless you, Jenson, it' me that stands treat. I always think there's no harm in being a bit civil t folks that have seen better days.

JEN. Did he go bankrupt then?

PET. Worse than that. He went t prison.

JEN. To prison!

PET. Or perhaps it was the Peni tentiary. [*Listens.*] Sh! They're leav ing the table.

The dining-room door is throw open from within, by a couple of wai ers. MRS. SORBY *comes out conversin with two gentlemen. Gradually th whole company follows, amongst the* WERLE. *Last come* HIALMAR EKDA *and* GREGERS WERLE.

MRS. S. [*in passing, to the servant*] Tell them to serve the coffee in th music-room, Pettersen.

PET. Very well, Madam.

[*She goes with the two Gentleme into the inner room, and thence ou to the right.* PETTERSON *and* JENSE *go out the same way.*

A Flabby Gentleman. [*to a* Thin-aired Gentleman]. Whew. What dinner!—It was no joke to do it stice.

The Thin-Haired Gentleman. Oh, ith a little good-will one can get rough a lot in three hours.

The Flabby Gentleman. Yes, but terwards, afterwards, my dear Cham-rlain!

A Third Gentleman. I hear the ffee and maraschino are to be served the music-room.

The Flabby Gentleman. Bravo! ıen perhaps Mrs. Sorby will play us mething.

The Thin-Haired Gentleman [*in low voice*]. I hope Mrs. Sorby ayn't play us a tune we don't like, e of these days!

The Flabby Gentleman. Oh, no, t she! Bertha will never turn ainst her old friends.

[*They laugh and pass into the inner om.*]

Wer. [*in a low voice, dejectedly*]. don't think anybody noticed it, egers.

Greg. [*looks at him*]. Noticed what?

Wer. Did you not notice it either?

Greg. What do you mean?

Wer. We were thirteen at table.

Greg. Indeed? Were there thirteen us.

Wer. [*glances towards* Hialmar dal]. Our usual party is twelve. *the others.*] This way, gentle-n!

[Werle *and the others, all except* almar *and* Gregers, *go out by the k, to the right.*]

Hial. [*who has overheard the con-versation*]. You ought not to have invited me, Gregers.

Greg. What! Not ask my best and only friend to a party supposed to be in my honour—?

Hial. But I don't think your father likes it. You see I am quite outside his circle.

Greg. So I hear. But I wanted to see you and have a talk with you, and I certainly shan't be staying long.—Ah, we two old schoolfellows have drifted far apart from each other. It must be sixteen or seventeen years since we met.

Hial. Is it so long?

Greg. It is indeed. Well, how goes it with you? You look well. You have put on flesh, and grown almost stout.

Hial. Well, "stout" is scarcely the word; but I daresay I look a little more of a man than I used to.

Greg. Yes, you do; your outer man is in first-rate condition.

Hial. [*in a tone of gloom*]. Ah, but the inner man! That is a very different matter, I can tell you! Of course you know of the terrible catastrophe that has befallen me and mine since last we met.

Greg. [*more softly*]. How are things going with your father now?

Hial. Don't let us talk of it, old fellow. Of course my poor unhappy father lives with me. He hasn't another soul in the world to care for him. But you can understand that this is a miserable subject for me.—Tell me, rather, how you have been getting on up at the works.

Greg. I have had a delightfully

lonely time of it—plenty of leisure to think and think about things. Come over here; we may as well make ourselves comfortable.

[*He seats himself in an arm-chair by the fire and draws* HIALMAN *down into another alongside of it.*

HIAL. [*sentimentally*]. After all, Gregers, I thank you for inviting me to your father's table; for I take it as a sign that you have got over your feeling against me.

GREG. [*surprised*]. How could you imagine I had any feeling against you?

HIAL. You had at first, you know.

GREG. How at first?

HIAL. After the great misfortune. It was natural enough that you should. Your father was within an ace of being drawn into that—well, that terrible business.

GREG. Why should that give me any feeling against you? Who can have put that into your head?

HIAL. I know it did, Gregers; your father told me so himself.

GREG. [*starts*]. My father! Oh indeed. H'm.—Was that why you never let me hear from you?—not a single word.

HIAL. Yes.

GREG. Not even when you made up your mind to become a photographer?

HIAL. Your father said I had better not write to you at all, about anything.

GREG. [*looking straight before him*]. Well, well, perhaps he was right.—But tell me now, Hialmar: are you pretty well satisfied with your present position?

HIAL. [*with a little sigh*]. Oh, yes I am; I have really no cause to complain. At first, as you may guess, I felt it a little strange. It was such a totally new state of things for me. But of course my whole circumstances were totally changed. Father's utter irretrievable ruin,—the shame and disgrace of it, Gregers—

GREG. [*affected*]. Yes, yes; I understand.

HIAL. I couldn't think of remaining at college; there wasn't a shilling to spare; on the contrary, there were debts—mainly to your father I believe—

GREG. H'm—

HIAL. In short, I thought it best to break, once for all, with my old surroundings and associations. It was your father that specially urged me to it; and since he interested himself so much in me—

GREG. My father did?

HIAL. Yes, you surely knew that didn't you? Where do you suppose I found the money to learn photography and to furnish a studio and make a start? All that costs a pretty penny, I can tell you.

GREG. And my father provided the money?

HIAL. Yes, my dear fellow, didn't you know? I understood him to say he had written to you about it.

GREG. Not a word about his part in the business. He must have forgotten it. Our correspondence has always been purely a business one. So it was my father that—!

HIAL. Yes, certainly. He didn't wish it to be generally known; but he it was. And of course it was he, to that put me in a position to marry

Don't you—don't you know about that ither?

GREG. No, I haven't heard a word f it. [*Shakes him by the arm*]. But, ny dear Hialmar, I can't tell you what leasure all this gives me—pleasure, nd self-reproach. I have perhaps done ny father injustice after all—in some hings. This proves that he has a heart. t shows a sort of compunction—

HIAL. Compunction—?

GREG. Yes, yes—whatever you like o call it. Oh, I can't tell you how lad I am to hear this of father.—So ou are a married man, Hialmar! That is further than I shall ever get. Well, I hope you are happy in your narried life?

HIAL. Yes, thoroughly happy. She s as good and capable a wife as any nan could wish for. And she is by o means without culture.

GREG. [*rather surprised*]. No, of ourse not.

HIAL. You see, life is itself an edu- ation. Her daily intercourse with ne— And then we know one or two ather remarkable men, who come a ood deal about us. I assure you, you ould hardly know Gina again.

GREG. Gina?

HIAL. Yes; had you forgotten that er name was Gina?

GREG. Whose name? I haven't the ightest idea—

HIAL. Don't you remember that ne used to be in service here?

GREG. [*looks at him*]. Is it Gina Iansen.

HIAL. Yes, of course, it is Gina Han- en.

GREG. ——who kept house for us uring the last year of my mother's lness?

HIAL. Yes, exactly. But, my dear friend, I'm quite sure your father told you that I was married.

GREG. [*who has risen*]. Oh, yes, he mentioned it; but not that— [*Walking about the room.*] Stay—perhaps he did—now that I think of it. My father always writes such short letters. [*Half seats himself on the arm of the chair.*] Now, tell me, Hialmar—this is interesting—how did you come to know Gina—your wife?

HIAL. The simplest thing in the world. You know Gina did not stay here long, everything was so much upset at that time, owing to your mother's illness and so forth, that Gina was not equal to it all; so she gave notice and left. That was the year before your mother died—or it may have been the same year.

GREG. It was the same year. I was up at the works then. But afterwards—?

HIAL. Well, Gina lived at home with her mother, Madam Hansen, an excellent, hard-working woman, who kept a little eating house. She had a room to let too; a very nice comfortable room.

GREG. And I suppose you were lucky enough to secure it?

HIAL. Yes; in fact, it was your father that recommended it to me. So it was there, you see, that I really came to know Gina.

GREG. And then you got engaged?

HIAL. Yes. It doesn't take young people long to fall in love—; h'm.—

GREG. [*rises and moves about a little*]. Tell me: was it after your engagement—was it then that my father—I mean was it then that you began to take up photography?

HIAL. Yes, precisely. I wanted to make a start, and to set up house as soon as possible; and your father and I agreed that this photography business was the readiest way. Gina thought so too. Oh, and there was another thing in its favour, by-the-bye; it happened, luckily, that Gina had learnt to retouch.

GREG. That chimed in marvellously.

HIAL. [*pleased, rises*]. Yes, didn't it? Don't you think it was a marvellous piece of luck?

GREG. Oh, unquestionably. My father seems to have been almost a kind of providence to you.

HIAL. [*with emotion*]. He did not forsake his old friend's son in the hour of his need. For he has a heart you see.

MRS. S. [*enters, arm-in-arm with* WERLE]. Nonsense, my dear Mr. Werle; you mustn't stop there any longer staring at all the lights. It's very bad for you.

WER. [*lets go her arm and passes his hand over his eyes.*] I daresay you are right.

[PETTERSEN *and* JENSEN *carry round refreshment trays.*]

MRS. S. [*to the Guests in the other room*]. This way, if you please, gentlemen. Whoever wants a glass of punch must be so good as to come in here.

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN [*comes up to* MRS. SORBY]. Surely, it isn't possible that you have suspended our cherished right to smoke?

MRS. S. Yes. No smoking here, in Mr. Werle's sanctum, Chamberlain.

THE THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN. When did you enact these stringent amendments on the cigar law, Mrs. Sorby?

MRS. S. After the last dinner, Chamberlain, when certain persons permitted themselves to overstep the mark.

THE THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN. And may one never overstep the mark a little bit, Madame Bertha? Not the least little bit?

MRS. S. Not in any respect whatsoever, Mr. Balle.

[*Most of the Guests have assembled in the study; servants hand round glasses of punch.*]

WER. [*to* HIALMAR, *who is studying beside a table.*] What are you studying so intently, Ekdal?

HIAL. Only an album, Mr. Werle.

THE THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN [*who is wandering about*]. Ah, photographs! They are quite in your line of course.

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN [*in an arm-chair*]. Haven't you brought any of your own with you?

HIAL. No, I haven't.

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN. You ought to have; it's very good for the digestion to sit and look at pictures.

THE THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN. And it contributes to the entertainment, you know.

THE SHORT-SIGHTED GENTLEMAN. And all contributions are thankfully received.

MRS. S. The Chamberlains think that when one is invited out to dinner, one ought to exert oneself a little in return, Mr. Ekdal.

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN. Where one dines so well, that duty becomes a pleasure.

THE THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN. And when it's a case of the struggle for existence, you know

MRS. S. I quite agree with you!

[*They continue the conversation with laughter and joking.*]

GREG. [*softly*]. You must join in, Hialmar.

HIAL. [*writhing*]. What am I to talk about?

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN. Don't you think, Mr. Werle, that Tokay may be considered one of the more wholesome sorts of wine?

WER. [*by the fire*]. I can answer for the Tokay you had to-day, at any rate; it's one of the very finest seasons. Of course you would notice that.

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN. Yes, it had a remarkably delicate flavour.

HIAL. [*shyly*]. Is there any difference between the seasons?

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN [*laughs*]. Come! That's good!

WER. [*smiles*]. It really doesn't pay to set fine wine before you.

THE THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN. Tokay is like photographs, Mr. Ekdal; they both need sunshine. Am I not right?

HIAL. Yes, light is important no doubt.

MRS. S. And it's exactly the same with the Chamberlains—they, too, depend very much on sunshine, as the saying is.

THE THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN. Oh, fie! That's a very threadbare sarcasm!

THE SHORT-SIGHTED GENTLEMAN. Mrs. Sorby is coming out——

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN. ——and at our expense, too. [*Holds up his finger reprovingly.*] Oh, Madame Bertha, Madame Bertha!

MRS. S. Yes, and there's not the least doubt that the seasons differ greatly. The old vintages are the finest.

THE SHORT-SIGHTED GENTLEMAN. Do you reckon me among the old vintages?

MRS. S. Oh, far from it.

THE THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN. There now! But me, dear Mrs. Sorby ——

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN. Yes, and me? What vintage should you say that we belong to?

MRS. S. Why, to the sweet vintages, gentlemen.

[*She sips a glass of punch. The gentlemen laugh and flirt with her.*]

WER. Mrs. Sorby can always find a loophole—when she wants to. Fill your glasses gentlemen! Pettersen, will you see to it——! Gregers, suppose we have a glass together. [GREGERS *does not move.*] Won't you join us, Ekdal? I found no opportunity of drinking with you at table.

[GRABERG, *the Bookkeeper, looks in at the baize door.*]

GRAB. Excuse me, sir, but I can't get out.

WER. Have you been locked in again?

GRAB. Yes, and Flakstad has carried off the keys.

WER. Well, you can pass out this way.

GRAB. But there's some one else——

WER. All right; come through, both of you. Don't be afraid.

[GRABERG *and* OLD EKDAL *come out of the office.*]

WER. [*involuntarily*]. Ugh!

[*The laughter and talk among the Guests cease.* HIALMAR *starts at the sight of his father, puts down his glass, and turns towards the fireplace.*]

EKD. [*does not look up, but makes little bows to both sides as he passes, murmuring*]. Beg pardon, come the wrong way. Door locked—door locked. Beg pardon.

[*He and* GRABERG *go out by the back, to the right.*]

WER. [*between his teeth*]. That idiot Graberg.

GREG. [*open-mouthed and staring, to* HIALMAR]. Why surely that wasn't ——!

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN. What's the matter? Who was it?

GREG. Oh, nobody, only the bookkeeper and some one with him.

THE SHORT-SIGHTED GENTLEMAN [*to* HIALMAR]. Did you know that man?

HIAL. I don't know—I didn't notice——

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN. What the deuce has come over every one?

[*He joins another group who are talking softly.*]

MRS. S. [*whispers to the Servant*]. Give him something to take with him; —something good, mind.

PET. [*nods*]. I'll see to it. [*Goes out*].

GREG. [*softly and with emotion, to* HIALMAR]. So that was really he!

HIAL. Yes.

GREG. And you could stand there and deny that you knew him!

HIAL. [*whispers vehemently*]. But how could I——!

GREG. ——acknowledge your own father?

HIAL. [*with pain*]. Oh, if you were in my place——

[*The conversation amongst the Guests, which has been carried on in a low tone, now swells into constrained joviality.*]

THE THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN [*approaching* HIALMAR *and* GREGERS *in a friendly manner*]. Ah! Reviving old college memories, eh? Don't you smoke, Mr. Ekdal? May I give you a light? Oh, by-the-bye, we mustn't—

HIAL. No, thank you, I wont——

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN. Haven't you a nice little poem you could recite to us, Mr. Ekdal? You used to recite so charmingly.

HIALMAR. I am sorry I can't remember anything.

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN. Oh, that's a pity. Well, what shall we do, Balle?

[*Both Gentlemen move away and pass into the other room.*]

HIAL. [*gloomily*]. Gregers—I am going! When a man has felt the crushing hand of Fate, you see—— Say good-bye to your father for me.

GREG. Yes, yes. Are you going straight home?

HIAL. Yes. Why?

GREG. Oh, because I may perhaps look in on you later.

HIAL. No, you mustn't do that. You must not come to my home. Mine is a melancholy abode, Gregers; especially after a splendid banquet like this. We can always arrange to meet somewhere in the town.

MRS. S. [*who has quietly approached*]. Are you going, Ekdal?

HIAL. Yes.

MRS. S. Remember me to Gina.

HIAL. Thanks.

MRS. S. And say I am coming up to see her one of these days.

HIAL. Yes, thank you. [*To* GREGERS.] Stay here; I will slip out unobserved.

[*He saunters away, then into the other room, and so out to the right.*]

MRS. S. [*softly to the* SERVANT, *who*

has come back]. Well, did you give the old man something?

PET. Yes; I sent him off with a bottle of cognac.

MRS. S. Oh, you might have thought of something better than that.

PET. Oh, no, Mrs. Sorby; cognac is what he likes best in the world.

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN [*in the doorway with a sheet of music in his hand.*] Shall we play a duet, Mrs. Sorby?

MRS. S. Yes, suppose we do.

THE GUESTS. Bravo, bravo!

[*She goes with all the Guests through the back room out to the right.* GREGERS *remains standing by the fire.* WERLE *is looking for something on the writing-table, and appears to wish that* GREGERS *would go; as* GREGERS *does not move,* WERLE *goes towards the door.*

GREG. Father, won't you stay a moment?

WER. [*stops*]. What is it?

GREG. I must have a word with you.

WER. Can it not wait until we are alone?

GREG. No, it cannot; for perhaps we shall never be alone together.

WER. [*drawing nearer*]. What do you mean by that?

[*During what follows, the pianoforte is faintly heard from the distant music-room.*]

GREG. How has that family been allowed to go so miserably to the wall?

WER. You mean the Ekdals, I suppose.

GREG. Yes, I mean the Ekdals. Lieutenant Ekdal was once so closely associated with you.

WER. Much too closely; I have felt that to my cost for many a year. It is thanks to him that I—yes *I*—have had a kind of slur cast upon my reputation.

GREG. [*softly*]. Are you sure that he alone was to blame?

WER. Who else do you suppose—?

GREG. You and he acted together in that affair of the forests—

WER. But was it not Ekdal that drew the map of the tracts we had bought—that fraudulent map! It was he who felled all that timber illegally on Government ground. In fact, the whole management was in his hands. I was quite in the dark as to what Lieutenant Ekdal was doing.

GREG. Lieutenant Ekdal himself seems to have been very much in the dark as to what he was doing.

WER. That may be. But the fact remains that he was found guilty and I acquitted.

GREG. Yes, I know that nothing was proved against you.

WER. Acquittal is acquittal. Why do you rake up these old miseries that turned my hair grey before its time? Is that sort of thing you have been brooding over up there, all these years? I can assure you Gregers, here in the town the whole story has been forgotten long ago—as far as *I* am concerned.

GREG. But that unhappy Ekdal family—

WER. What would you have me do for the people? When Ekdal came out of prison he was a broken-down being, past all help. There are people in the world who dive to the bottom the moment they get a couple of slugs in their body, and never come to the surface again. You may take my word for it, Gregers, I have done all I could

without positively laying myself open to all sorts of suspicion and gossip—

GREG. Suspicion—? Oh, I see.

WER. I have given Ekdal copying to do for the office, and I pay him far, far more for it than his work is worth —

GREG. [*without looking at him*]. H'm; that I don't doubt.

WER. You laugh? Do you think I am not telling you the truth? Well, I certainly can't refer you to my books, for I never enter payments of that sort.

GREG. [*smiles coldly.*] No, there are certain payments it is best to keep no account of.

WER. [*taken aback.*] What do you mean by that?

GREG. [*mustering up courage*]. Have you entered what it cost you to have Hialmar Ekdal taught photography?

WER. I? How "entered" it?

GREG. I have learnt that it was you who paid for his training. And I have learnt, too, that it was you who enabled him to set up house so comfortably.

WER. Well, and yet you talk as though I had done nothing for the Ekdals! I can assure you these people have cost me enough in all conscience.

GREG. Have you entered any of these expenses in your books?

WER. Why do you ask?

GREG. Oh, I have my reasons. Now tell me: when you interested yourself so warmly in your old friend's son—it was just before his marriage, was it not?

WER. Why, deuce take it—after all these years, how can I—?

GREG. You wrote me a letter about that time—a business letter, of course; and in a postscript you mentioned—quite briefly—that Hialmar Ekdal had married a Miss Hansen.

WER. Yes, that was quite right. That was her name.

GREG. But you did not mention that this Miss Hansen was Gina Hansen—our former housekeeper.

WER. [*with a forced laugh of derision*]. No; to tell the truth, it didn't occur to me that you were so particularly interested in our former housekeeper.

GREG. No more I was. But [*lowers his voice*] there were others in this house who were particularly interested in her.

WER. What do you mean by that? [*Flaring up*]. You are not alluding to me, I hope?

GREG. [*softly but firmly*]. Yes, I am alluding to you.

WER. And you dare—! You presume to—! How can that ungrateful hound —that photographer fellow—how dare he go making such insinuations!

GREG. Hialmar has never breathed a word about this. I don't believe he has the faintest suspicion of such a thing?

WER. Then where have you got it from? Who can have put such notions in your head?

GREG. My poor unhappy mother told me; and that the very last time I saw her.

WER. Your mother! I might have known as much! You and she—you always held together. It was she who turned you against me, from the first.

GREG. No, it was all that she had to suffer and submit to, until she broke down and came to such a pitiful end.

WER. Oh, she had nothing to suffer

or submit to; not more than most people, at all events. But there's no getting on with morbid, overstrained creatures—that I have learned to my cost—And you could go on nursing such a suspicion—burrowing into all sorts of slanders against your own father! I must say, Gregers, I really think at your age you might find something more useful to do.

GREG. Yes, it is high time.

WER. Then perhaps your mind would be easier than it seems to be now. What can be your object in remaining up at the works, year out and year in, drudging away like a common clerk, and not drawing a farthing more than the ordinary monthly wage? It is downright folly.

GREG. Ah, if I were only sure of that.

WER. I understand you well enough. You want to be independent; you won't be beholden to me for anything. Well, now there happens to be an opportunity for you to become independent, your own master in everything.

GREG. Indeed? In what way—?

WER. When I wrote you insisting on your coming to town at once—h'm—

GREG. Yes, what is it you really want of me? I have been waiting all day to know.

WER. I want to propose that you should enter the firm, as partner.

GREG. I! join your firm? As partner?

WER. Yes. It would not involve our being constantly together. You could take over the business here intown, and I should move up to the works.

GREG. You would?

WER. The fact is, I am not so fit for work as I once was. I am obliged to spare my eyes, Gregers; they have begun to trouble me.

GREG. They have always been weak.

WER. Not as they are now. And besides, circumstances might possibly make it desirable for me to live up there—for a time, at any rate.

GREG. That is certainly quite a new idea to me.

WER. Listen, Gregers; there are many things that stand between us; but we are father and son after all. We ought surely to be able to come to some sort of understanding with each other.

GREG. Outwardly, you mean, of course?

WER. Well, even that would be something. Think it over, Gregers. Don't you think it ought to be possible? Eh?

GREG. [*looking at him coldly*]. There is something behind all this.

WER. How so?

GREG. You want to make use of me in some way.

WER. In such a close relationship as ours, the one can always be useful to the other.

GREG. Yes, so people say.

WER. I want very much to have you at home with me for a time. I am a lonely man, Gregers; I have always felt lonely, all my life through; but most of all now that I am getting up in years. I feel the need of some one about me—

GREG. You have Mrs. Sorby.

WER. Yes, I have her; and she has become, I may say, almost indispensable to me. She is lively and even-tem-

pered; she brightens up the house; and that is a very great thing for me.

GREG. Well then, you have everything as you wish it.

WER. Yes, but I am afraid it can't last. A woman so situated may easily find herself in a false position, in the eyes of the world. For that matter it does a man no good, either.

GREG. Oh, when a man gives such dinners as you give, he can risk a great deal.

WER. Yes, but how about the woman, Gregers? I fear she won't accept the situation much longer; and even if she did—even if, out of attachment to me, she were to take her chance of gossip and scandal and all that—? Do you think, Gregers—you with your strong sense of justice—

GREG. [*interrupts him*]. Tell me in one word; are you thinking of marrying her?

WER. Suppose I were thinking of it? What then?

GREG. That's what I say: what then?

WER. Should you be inflexibly opposed to it!

GREG. Not at all. Not by any means.

WER. I was not sure whether your devotion to your mother's memory—

GREG. I am not overstrained.

WER. Well, whatever you may or not be, at all events you have lifted a great weight from my mind. I am extremely pleased that I can reckon on your concurrence in this matter.

GREG. [*looking intently at him*]. Now I see the use you want to put me to.

WER. Use to put you to? What an expression!

GREG. Oh, don't let us be nice in our choice of words — not when we are alone together, at any rate. [*With a short laugh.*] Well, well. So this is what made it absolutely essential that I should come to town in person. For the sake of Mrs. Sorby, we are to get up a pretence at family life in the house—a tableau of filial affection. That will be something new indeed.

WER. How dare you speak in that tone!

GREG. Was there ever any family life here? Never since I can remember. But now, forsooth, your plans demand something of the sort. No doubt it will have an excellent effect when it is reported that the son has hastened home, on the wings of filial piety, to the grey haired father's wedding-feast. What will then remain of all the rumours as to the wrongs the poor dead mother had to submit to? Not a vestige. Her son annihilates them at one stroke.

WER. Gregers—I believe there is no one in the world you detest as you do me.

GREG. [*softly*]. I have seen you at too close quarters.

WER. You have seen me with your mother's eyes. [*Lowers his voice a little.*] But you should remember that her eyes were—clouded now and then.

GREG. [*quivering*]. I see what you are hinting at. But who was to blame for mother's unfortunate weakness? Why you, and all those—! The last of them was this woman that you palmed off upon Hialmar Ekdal, when you were—Ugh!

WER. [*shrugs his shoulders*]. Word for word as if it were your mother speaking!

GREG. [*without heeding*]. And there he is now, with his great, confiding childlike mind, compassed about with all this treachery — living under the

same roof with such a creature, and never dreaming that what he calls his home is built up on a lie! [*Comes a step nearer.*] When I look back upon your past, I seem to see a battle-field with shattered lives on every hand.

WER. I begin to think that the chasm that divides us is too wide.

GREG. [*bowing with self-command.*] So I have observed; and therefore I take my hat and go.

WER. You are going. Out of the house?

GREG. Yes. For at last I see my mission in life.

WER. What mission?

GREG. You would only laugh if I told you.

WER. A lonely man doesn't laugh so easily, Gregers.

GREG. [*pointing towards the background.*] Look, father,—the Chamberlains are playing blind-man's-buff with Mrs. Sorby.—Good-night and good-bye.

[*He goes out by the back to the right. Sound of laughter and merriment from the Company, who are now visible in the outer room.*]

WER. [*muttering contemptuously after* GREGERS]. Ha—! Poor wretch—and he says he is not overstrained!

ACT II

SCENE—HIALMAR EKDAL'S *studio, a good-sized room, evidently in the top story of the building. On the right, a sloping roof of large panes of glass, half-covered by a blue curtain. In the right-hand corner, at the back, the entrance door; farther forward, on the same side, a door leading to the sitting-room. Two doors on the opposite side, and between them an iron stove. At the back, a wide double sliding-door. The studio is plainly but comfortably fitted up and furnished. Between the doors on the right, standing out a little from the wall, a sofa with a table and some chairs; on the table a lighted lamp with a shade; beside the stove an old arm-chair. Photographic instruments and apparatus of different kinds lying about the room. Against the back wall, to the left of the double door, stands a bookcase containing a few books, boxes, and bottles of chemicals, instruments, tools and other objects. Photographs and small articles, such as camel's hair pencils, paper, and so forth, lie on the table.*

[GINA EKDAL *sits on a chair by the table, sewing.* HEDVIG *is sitting on the sofa, with her hands shading her eyes and her thumbs in her ears, reading a book.*]

GINA [*glances once or twice at* HEDVIG, *as if with secret anxiety; then says*] Hedvig!

HED. [*does not hear.*]

GINA [*repeats more loudly*]. Hedvig!

HED. [*takes away her hands and looks up*]. Yes, mother?

GINA. Hedvig dear, you mustn't sit reading any longer now.

HED. Oh, mother, mayn't I read a little more? Just a little bit?

GINA. No, no, you must put away your book now. Father doesn't like it; he never reads himself in the evening.

HED. [*shuts the book*]. No, father doesn't care much about reading.

GINA [*puts aside her sewing and takes up a lead pencil and a little account-book from the table*]. Can you remember how much we paid for the butter to-day?

HED. It was one crown sixty-five.

GINA. That's right. [*Puts it down.*] It's terrible what a lot of butter we get through in this house. Then there was the smoked sausage, and the cheese—let me see—[*writes.*]—and the ham—[*adds up.*] Yes, that makes just—

HED. And then the beer.

GINA. Yes, to be sure. [*Writes.*] How it do mount up! But we can't manage with no less.

HED. And then you and I didn't need anything hot for dinner, as father was out.

GINA. No; that was so much to the good. And then I took eight crowns fifty for the photographs.

HED. Really! So much as that?

GINA. Exactly eight crowns fifty.

[*Silence.* GINA *takes up her sewing again,* HEDVIG *takes paper and pencil and begins to draw, shading her eyes with her left hand.*]

HED. Isn't it jolly to think that father is at Mr. Werle's big dinner-party?

GINA. You know he's not really Mr. Werle's guest. It was the son invited him. [*After a pause.*] We have nothing to do with that Mr. Werle.

HED. I'm longing for father to come home. He promised to ask Mrs. Sorby for something nice for me.

GINA. Yes, there's plenty of good things going in that house, I can tell you.

HED. [*goes on drawing*]. And I believe I'm a little hungry too.

[OLD EKDAL, *with the paper parcel under his arm and another parcel in his coat pocket, comes in by the entrance door.*].

GINA. How late you are to-day grandfather!

EKD. They had locked the office door. Had to wait in Graberg's room. And then they let me through—h'm.

HED. Did you get some more copying to do, grandfather?

EKD. This whole packet. Just look.

GINA. That's capital.

HED. And you have another parcel in your pocket.

EKD. Eh? Oh, never mind, that's nothing. [*Puts his stick away in a corner.*] This work will keep me going a long time, Gina. [*Opens one of the sliding doors in the back wall a little.*] Hush! [*Peeps into the room for a moment then pushes the door carefully to again.*] Hee-hee! They're fast asleep, all the lot of them. And she's gone into the basket herself. Hee-hee!

HED. Are you sure she isn't cold in that basket, grandfather?

EKD. Not a bit of it! Cold? With all that straw? [*Goes towards the farther door on the left.*] There are matches in here, I suppose.

GINA. The matches is on the drawers.

[EKDAL *goes into his room.*]

HED. It's nice that grandfather has got all that copying.

GINA. Yes, poor old father; it means a bit of pocket money for him.

HED. And he won't be able to sit the whole forenoon down at that horrid Madam Eriksen's.

GINA. No more he won't. [*Short silence.*

HED. Do you suppose they are still at the dinner-table?

GINA. Goodness knows; as like as not.

HED. Think of all the delicious things father is having to eat! I'm certain he'll be in splendid spirits when he comes. Don't you think so, mother?

GINA. Yes; and if only we could tell him that we'd got the room let—

HED. But we don't need that this evening.

GINA. Oh, we'd be none the worst of it, I can tell you. It's no use to us as it is.

HED. I mean we don't need it this evening, for father will be in good humour at any rate. It is best to keep the letting of the room for another time.

GINA. [*looks across at her*]. You like having some good news to tell father when he comes home in the evening?

HED. Yes, for then things are pleasanter somehow.

GINA. [*thinking to herself*]. Yes, yes, there's something in that.

[OLD EKDAL *comes in again and is going out by the foremost door to the left.*]

GINA. [*half turning in her chair*]. Do you want something in the kitchen, grandfather?

EKD. Yes, yes, I do. Don't you trouble. [*Goes out.*]

GINA. He's not poking away at the fire, is he? [*Waits a moment.*] Hedvig go and see what he's about.

[EKDAL *comes in again with a small jug of steaming hot water.*]

HED. Have you been getting some hot water, grandfather?

EKD. Yes, hot water. Want it for something. Want to write, and the ink has got as thick as porridge—h'm.

GINA. But you'd best have your supper, first, grandfather. It's laid in there.

EKD. Can't be bothered with supper Gina. Very busy I tell you. No one's to come to my room. No one—h'm.

[*He goes into his room;* GINA *and* HEDVIG *look at each other.*]

GINA. [*softly.*] Can you imagine where he's got money from?

HED. From Graberg, perhaps.

GINA. Not a bit of it. Graberg always sends the money to me.

HED. Then he must have got a bottle on credit somewhere.

GINA. Poor grandfather, who'd give him credit?

[HIALMAR EKDAL, *in an overcoat and grey felt hat, comes in from the right.*]

GINA. [*throws down her sewing and rises.*] Why Ekdal, is that you already?

HED. [*at the same time jumping up*]. Fancy your coming so soon, father!

HIAL. [*taking off his hat*]. Yes, most of the people were coming away.

HED. So early?

HIAL. Yes, it was a dinner-party, you know.

[*Takes off his overcoat.*]

GINA. Let me help you.

HED. Me too.

[*They draw off his coat;* GINA *hangs it up on the back wall.*]

HED. Were there many people there, father?

HIAL. Oh, no, not many. We had about twelve or fourteen at table.

GINA. And you had some talk with them all?

HIAL. Oh, yes, a little; but Gregers took me up most of the time.

GINA. Is Gregers as ugly as ever?

HIAL. Well, he's not very much to look at. Hasn't the old man come home?

HED. Yes, grandfather is in his room, writing.

HIAL. Did he say anything?

GINA. No, what should he say?

HIAL. Didn't he say anything about —? I heard something about his having

been with Graberg. I'll go in and see him for a moment.

GINA. No, no, better not.

HIAL. Why not? Did he say he didn't want me to go in?

GINA. I don't think he wants to see nobody this evening—

HED. [*making signs*]. H'm—h'm!

GINA. [*not noticing*]. —he has been in to fetch hot water—

HED. Aha! Then he's—

GINA. Yes, I suppose so.

HIAL. Oh, God! my poor old white-haired father!—Well, well; there let him sit and get all the enjoyment he can.

[OLD EKDAL, *in an indoor coat and with a lighted pipe, comes from his room.*]

EKD. Got home? Thought it was you I heard talking.

HIAL. Yes, I have just come.

EKD. You didn't see me, did you?

HIAL. No, but they told me you had passed through—so I thought I would follow you.

EKD. H'm, good of you Hialmar.—Who were they, all those fellows?

HIAL. Oh, all sorts of people. There was Chamberlain Flor, and Chamberlain Balle, and Chamberlain Kaspersen and Chamberlain—this, that and the other—I don't know who all—

EKD. [*nodding*]. Hear that, Gina! Chamberlains every one of them!

GINA. Yes, I hear as they're terrible genteel in that house nowadays.

HED. Did the Chamberlains sing, father? Or did they read aloud?

HIAL. No, they only talked nonsense. They wanted me to recite something for them; but I knew better than that.

EKD. You weren't to be persuaded, eh?

GINA. Oh, you might have done it.

HIAL. No; one mustn't be at everybody's beck and call. [*Walks about the room.*] That's not my way, at any rate.

EKD. No, no; Hialmar's not to be had for the asking, he isn't.

HIAL. I don't see why I should bother myself to entertain people on the rare occasions when I go into society. Let the others exert themselves. These fellows go from one great dinner-table to the next and gorge and guzzle day out and day in. It's for them to bestir themselves and do something in return for all the good feeding they get.

GINA. But you didn't say that?

HIAL. [*humming*]. Ho-ho-ho—; faith, I gave them a bit of my mind.

EKD. Not the Chamberlains?

HIAL. Oh, why not? [*Lightly.*] After that, we had a little discussion about Tokay.

EKD. Tokay! There's a fine wine for you!

HIAL. [*comes to a standstill*]. It may be a fine wine. But of course you know the vintages differ; it all depends on how much sunshine the grapes have had.

GINA. Why, you know everything, Ekdal.

EKD. And did they dispute that?

HIAL. They tried to; but they were requested to observe it was just the same with Chamberlains that with them, too, different batches were of different qualities.

GINA. What things you do think of?

EKD. Hee-hee! so they got that in in their pipes, too?

HIAL. Right in their teeth.

EKD. Do you hear that, Gina. He said it right in the very teeth of all the Chamberlain's.

GINA. Fancy—! Right in their teeth!

HIAL. Yes, but I don't want it talked about. One doesn't speak of such things. The whole affair passed off quite amicably of course. They were nice genial fellows; I didn't want to wound them—not I!

EKD. Right in their teeth, though—!

HED. [*caressingly*]. How nice it is to see you in a dress-coat! It suits you so well, father.

HIAL. Yes, don't you think, so? And this one really fits to perfection. It fits almost as if it had been made for me:—a little tight in the arm-holes perhaps; —help me, Hedvig [*takes off the coat*]. I think I'll put on my jacket. Where is my jacket, Gina?

GINA. Here it is. [*Brings the jacket and helps him.*]

HIAL. That's it! Don't forget to send the coat back to Molvik first thing tomorrow morning.

GINA. [*laying it away*]. I'll be sure and see to it.

HIAL. [*stretching himself*]. After all, there's a more homely feeling about this. A free-and-easy indoor costume suits my whole personality better. Don't you think so, Hedvig?

HED. Yes, father.

HIAL. When I loosen my necktie into a pair of flowing ends—like this—eh?

HED. Yes, and that goes so well with your moustache and the sweep of your curls.

HIAL. I should not call them curls exactly; I should rather say locks.

HED. Yes, they are too big for curls.

HIAL. Locks describes them better.

HED. [*after a pause, twitching his jacket.*] Father!

HIAL. Well, what is it?

HED. Oh, you know very well.

HIAL. No, really I don't—

HED. [*half laughing, half whispering*]. Oh, yes, father; now don't tease me any longer!

HIAL. Why, what do you mean?

HED. [*shaking him.*] Oh, what nonsense; come where are they, father? All the good things you promised me, you know?

HIAL. Oh—if I haven't forgotten all about them!

HED. Now you're only teasing me, father! Oh, it's too bad of you! Where have you put them?

HIAL. No, I positively forgot to get anything. But wait a little! I have something else for you, Hedvig.

[*Goes and searches in the pockets of the coat.*]

HED. [*skipping and clapping her hands*]. Oh, mother, mother!

HIAL. [*with a paper*]. Look, here it is.

GINA. There, you see; if you only give him time—

HED. That? Why, that's only a paper.

HIAL. That is the bill of fare, my dear; the whole bill of fare. Here you see: "Menu"—that means bill of fare.

HED. Haven't you anything else?

HIAL. I forgot the other things, I tell you. But you may take my word for it, these dainties are very unsatisfying. Sit down at the table and read the bill of fare, and then I'll describe to you how the dishes taste. Here you are Hedvig.

HED. [*gulping down her tears.*] Thank you. [*She seats herself, but does not read;* GINA *makes signs to her;* HIALMAR *notices it.*]

HIAL. [*pacing up and down the room*]. It's monstrous what absurd

things the father of a family is expected to think of; and if he forgets the smallest trifle, he is treated to sour faces at once. Well, well, one gets used to that too. [*Stops near the stove by the old man's chair.*] Have you peeped in there this evening, father?

EKD. Yes, to be sure I have. She's gone into the basket.

HIAL. Ah, she has gone into the basket. Then she's beginning to get used to it.

EKD. Yes, just as I prophesied. But you know there are still a few little things—

HIAL. A few improvements, yes.

EKD. They've got to be made, you know.

HIAL. Yes, let us have a talk about the improvements, father. Come, let us sit on the sofa.

EKD. All right. H'm—think I'll just fill my pipe first. Must clean it out, too. H'm.

[*He goes into his room.*]

GINA [*smiling to* HIALMAR. His pipe!

HIAL. Oh, yes, yes, Gina; let him alone— the poor shipwrecked old man. —Yes, these improvements—we had better get them out of hand to-morrow.

GINA. You'll hardly have time to-morrow, Ekdal.

HED. [*interposing*]. Oh, yes, he will, mother!

GINA. —for remember them prints that has to be retouched; they've sent for them time after time.

HIAL. There now! those prints again! I shall get them finished all right! Have any new orders come in?

GINA. No, worse luck; to-morrow I have nothing to do but those two sittings, you know.

HIAL. Nothing else? Oh, no, if people won't set about things with a will—

GINA. But what more can I do? Don't I advertise in the papers as much as we can afford?

HIAL. Yes, the papers; you see how much good they do. And I suppose no one has been to look at the room either?

GINA. No, not yet.

HIAL. That was only to be expected. If people won't keep their eyes open—. Nothing can be done without a real effort, Gina!

HED. [*going towards him*]. Shall I fetch you the flute, father?

HIAL. No; no flute for me; *I* want no pleasures in this world. [*Pacing about.*] Yes, indeed I will work to-morrow; you shall see if I don't. You may be sure I shall work as long as my strength holds out.

GINA. But my dear good Ekdal, I didn't mean it in that way.

HED. Father, mayn't I bring in a bottle of beer?

HIAL. No, certainly not. I require nothing, nothing— [*Comes to a standstill.*] Beer? Was it beer you were talking about?

HED. [*cheerfully*]. Yes, father; beautiful fresh beer.

HIAL. Well,—since you insist upon it, you may bring in a bottle.

GINA. Yes, do; and we'll be nice and cosy.

[HEDVIG *runs towards the kitchen door*].

HIAL. [*by the stove, stops her, looks at her, puts his arm round her neck and presses her to him.*] Hedvig, Hedvig!

HED. [*with tears of joy.*] My dear, kind father!

HIAL. No, don't call me that. Here

have I been feasting at the rich man's table,—battening at the groaning board—! And I couldn't even—!

GINA. [*sitting at the table.* Oh, nonsense, nonsense, Ekdal.

HIAL. It's not nonsense! And yet you mustn't be too hard upon me. You know that I love you for all that.

HED. [*throwing her arms round him*]. And we love you, oh, so dearly, father!

HIAL. And if I am unreasonable once in a while,—why then—you must remember that I am a man beset by a host of cares. There, There! [*Dries his eyes.*] No beer at such a moment as this. Give me the flute.

[HEDVIG *runs to the bookcase and fetches it.*]

HIAL. Thanks! That's right. With my flute in my hand and you two at my side—ah—!

[HEDVIG *seats herself at the table near* GINA; HIALMAR *paces backwards and forwards, pipes up vigorously, and plays a Bohemian peasant dance, but in a slow plaintive tempo, and with sentimental expression.*]

HIAL. [*breaking off the melody, holds out his left hand to* GINA *and says with emotion.*] Our roof may be poor and humble, Gina; but it is home. And with all my heart I say; here dwells my happiness.

[*He begins to play again; almost immediately after a knocking is heard at the entrance door.*]

GINA [*rising*]. Hush, Ekdal,— I think there's some one at the door.

HIAL. [*laying the flute on the bookcase.*] There! Again!

[GINA *goes and opens the door.*]

GREG. [*in the passage*]. Excuse me—

GINA [*starting back slightly*]. Oh!

GREG. —does not Mr. Ekdal, the photographer, live here?

GINA. Yes, he does.

HIAL. [*going towards the door.*] Gregers! You here after all? Well, come in then.

GREG. [*coming in*]. I told you I would come and look you up.

HIAL. But this evening—? Have you left the party?

GREG. I have left both the party and my father's house— Good evening Mrs. Ekdal. I don't know whether you recognize me?

GINA. Oh, yes; it's not difficult to know young Mr. Werle again.

GREG. No, I am like my mother; and no doubt you remember her.

HIAL. Left your father's house, did you say?

GREG. Yes, I have gone to a hotel.

HIAL. Indeed. Well, since you're here, take off your coat and sit down.

GREG. Thanks.

[*He takes off his overcoat. He is now dressed in a plain grey suit of a countrified cut.*]

HIAL. Here on the sofa. Make yourself comfortable.

GREG. [*looking around him.*] So these are your quarters, Hialmar — this is your home.

HIAL. This is the studio, as you see—

GINA. But it's the largest of our rooms, so we generally sit here.

HIAL. We used to live in a better place; but this flat has one great advantage; there are such capital outer rooms—

GINA. And we have a room on the other side of the passage that we can let.

GREG. [*to* HIALMAR]. Ah—so you have lodgers too?

HIAL. No, not yet. They're not so easy to find, you see; you have to keep your eyes open. [*To* HEDVIG.] How about that beer, eh?

[HEDVIG *nods and goes out into the kitchen.*]

GREG. So that is your daughter?

HIAL. Yes, that is Hedvig.

GREG. And she is your only child?

HIAL. Yes, the only one. She is the joy of our lives, and—[*lowering his voice*]—at the same time our deepest sorrow, Gregers.

GREG. What do you mean?

HIAL. She is in serious danger of losing her eyesight.

GREG. Becoming blind?

HIAL. Yes. Only the first symptoms have appeared as yet, and she may not feel it much for some time. But the doctor has warned us. It is coming inexorably.

GREG. What a terrible misfortune! How do you account for it?

HIAL. [*sighs*]. Hereditary, no doubt.

GREG. [*starting*]. Hereditary?

GINA. Ekdal's mother had weak eyes.

HIAL. Yes, so my father says; I can't remember her.

GREG. Poor child! And how does she take it?

HIAL. Oh, you can imagine we haven't the heart to tell her of it. She dreams of no danger. Gay and careless and chirping like a little bird, she flutters onward into a life of endless night. [*Overcome.*] Oh, it is cruelly hard on me Gregers.

[HEDVIG *brings a tray with beer and glasses, which she sets upon the table.*]

HIAL. [*stroking her hair*]. Thanks, thanks, Hedvig.

[HEDVIG *puts her arm around his neck and whispers in his ear.*]

HIAL. No, no bread and butter just now. [*Looks up.*] But perhaps you would like some, Gregers.

GREG. [*with a gesture of refusal*]. No, no thank you.

HIAL. [*still melancholy*]. Well, you can bring in a little all the same. If you have a crust, that is all I want. And plenty of butter on it, mind.

[HEDVIG *nods gaily and goes out into the kitchen again.*]

GREG. [*who has been following her with his eyes.*] She seems quite strong and healthy otherwise.

GINA. Yes. In other ways there's nothing amiss with her, thank goodness.

GREG. She promises to be very like you, Mrs. Ekdal. How old is she now?

GINA. Hedvig is close on fourteen; her birthday is the day after to-morrow.

GREG. She is pretty tall for her age, then.

GINA. Yes, she's shot up wonderful this last year.

GREG. It makes one realize one's own age to see these young people growing up.—How long is it now since you were married?

GINA. We've been married—let me see—just on fifteen years.

GREG. Is it so long as that?

GINA. [*becomes attentive; looks at him.*] Yes, it is indeed.

HIAL. Yes, so it is. Fifteen years all but a few months. [*Changing his tone.*] They must have been long years for you, up at the works, Gregers.

GREG. They seemed long while I was living them; now they are over, I hardly know how the time has gone.

[OLD EKDAL *comes from his room without his pipe, but with his old-*

fashioned uniform cap on his head; his gait is somewhat unsteady.]

EKD. Come now, Hialmar, let's sit down and have a good talk about this—h'm — what was it again?

HIAL. [*going towards him*]. Father, we have a visitor here—Gregers Werle—I don't know if you remember him.

EKD. [*looking at* GREGERS, *who has risen*]. Werle? Is that the son? What does he want with me?

HIAL. Nothing! it's me he has come to see.

EKD. Oh! Then there's nothing wrong?

HIAL. No, no, of course not.

EKD. [*with a large gesture*]. Not that I'm afraid you know; but—

GREG. [*goes over to him*]. I bring you a greeting from your old hunting-grounds, Lieutenant Ekdal.

EKD. Hunting-grounds?

GREG. Yes, up in Höidal, about the works, you know.

EKD. Oh, up there. Yes, I knew all those places well in the old days.

GREG. You were a great sportsman, then.

EKD. So I was, I don't deny it. You're looking at my uniform cap. I don't ask anybody's leave to wear it in the house. So long as I don't go out in the streets with it—

[HEDVIG *brings a plate of bread and butter, which she puts upon the table*].

HIAL. Sit down, father, and have a glass of beer. Help yourself, Gregers.

[EKDAL *mutters and stumbles over to the sofa.* GREGERS *seats himself on the chair nearest to him,* HIALMAR *on the other side of* GREGERS. GINA *sits a little way from the table, sewing;* HEDVIG *stands beside her father.*]

GREG. Can you remember, Lieutenant Ekdal, how Hialmar and I used to come up and visit you in the summer and at Christmas?

EKD. Did you? No, no, no; I don't remember it. But sure enough I've been a tidy bit of sportsman in my day. I've shot bears too. I've shot nine of 'em no less.

GREG. [*looking sympathetically at him.*] And now you never get any shooting?

EKD. Can't say that, sir. Get a shot now and then perhaps. Of course not in the old way. For the woods you see—the woods, the woods—! [*Drinks.*] Are the woods fine up there now?

GREG. Not so fine as in your time. They have been thinned out a good deal.

EKD. Thinned? [*More softly, and as if afraid.*] It's dangerous work that. Bad things come of it. The woods revenge themselves.

HIAL. [*filling up his glass*]. Come—a little more, father.

GREG. How can a man like you—such a man for the open air—live in the midst of a stuffy town, boxed within four walls?

EKD. [*laughs quietly and glances at* HIALMAR.] Oh, it's not so bad here. Not at all so bad.

GREG. But don't you miss all the things that used to be a part of your very being—the cool sweeping breezes, the free life in the woods and on the uplands, among beasts and birds—?

EKD. [*smiling*]. Hialmar, shall we let him see it?

HIAL. [*hastily and a little embarressed*]. Oh, no, no, father; not this evening.

GREG. What does he want to show me?

HIAL. Oh, it's only something—you can see it another time.

GREG. [*continues, to the old man*]. You see I have been thinking Lieutenant Ekdal, that you should come up with me to the works: I am sure to be going back soon. No doubt you could get some copying there too. And here, you have nothing on earth to interest you—nothing to liven you up.

EKD. [*stares in astonishment at him*]. Have I nothing on earth to—!

GREG. Of couse you have Hialmar; but then he has his own family. And a man like you, who has always had such a passion for what is free and wild—

EKD. [*thumps the table*]. Hialmar, he shall see it!

HIAL. Oh, do you think it's worth while, father? It's all dark.

EKD. Nonsense; it's moonlight. [*Rises*]. He shall see it, I tell you. Let me pass! Come on and help me, Hialmar.

HED. Oh yes, do, father!

HIAL. [*rising*]. Very well then.

GREG. [*to* GINA]. What is it?

GINA. Oh, nothing so wonderful after all.

[EKDAL *and* HIALMAR *have gone to the back wall and are each pushing back a side of the sliding door;* HEDVIG *helps the old man;* GREGERS *remains standing by the sofa;* GINA *sits still and sews. Through the open doorway a large, deep irregular garret is seen with odd nooks and corners; a couple of stovepipes running through it, from rooms below. There are skylights through which clear moonbeams shine in on some parts of the great room; others lie in deep shadow*].

EKD. [*to* GREGERS]. You may come close up if you like.

GREG. [*going over to them*]. Why, what is it?

EKD. Look for yourself, H'm.

HIAL. [*somewhat embarrassed*]. This belongs to father, you understand.

GREG. [*at the door, looks into the garret*]. Why, you keep poultry, Lieutenant Ekdal.

EKD. Should think we did keep poultry. They've gone to roost now. But you should see our fowls by daylight, sir!

HED. And there's a—

EKD. Sh—sh! don't say anything about it yet.

GREG. And you have pigeons too, I see.

EKD. Oh, yes, haven't we just got pigeons! They have their nest boxes up there under the roof-tree; for pigeons like to roost high, you see.

HIAL. They aren't all common pigeons.

EKD. Common! Should think not indeed! We have tumblers, and a pair of pouters, too. But come here! Can you see that hutch down there by the wall?

GREG. Yes; what do you use it for?

EKD. That's where the rabbits sleep, sir.

GREG. Dear me; so you have rabbits, too?

EKD. Yes, you may take my word for it, we have rabbits! He wants to know if we have rabbits, Hialmar! H'm! But now comes the thing, let me tell you! Here we have it! Move away Hedvig. Stand here; that's right,—and now look down there.—Don't you see a basket with straw in it?

GREG. Yes. And I can see a fowl lying in the basket.

EKD. H'm—"a fowl"—

GREG. Isn't it a duck?

EKD. [*hurt*]. Why, of course it's a duck.

HIAL. But what kind of a duck, do you think?

HED. It's not just a common duck—

EKD. Sh!

GREG. And it's not a Muscovy duck either.

EKD. No, Mr. — Werle; it's not a Muscovy duck; for it's a wild duck!

GREG. Is it really? A wild duck?

EKD. Yes, that's what it is. That "fowl" as you call it—is the wild duck. It's our wild duck, sir.

HED. My wild duck. It belongs to me.

GREG. And can it live up here in the garret? Does it thrive?

EKD. Of course it has a trough of water to splash about in, you know.

HIAL. Fresh water every other day.

GINA [*turning towards* HIALMAR]. But my dear Ekdal, it's getting icy cold here.

EKD. H'm, we had better shut up then. It's as well not to disturb their night's rest, too. Close up, Hedvig.

[HIALMAR *and* HEDVIG *push the garret doors together.*]

EKD. Another time you shall see her properly. [*Seats himself in the armchair by the stove.*] Oh, they're curious things, these wild ducks, I can tell you.

GREG. How did you manage to catch it, Lieutenant Ekdal?

EKD. *I* didn't catch it. There's a certain man in this town whom we have to thank for it.

GREG. [*starts slightly*]. That man was not my father, was he?

EKD. You've hit it. Your father and no one else. H'm.

HIAL. Strange that you should guess that, Gregers.

GREG. You were telling me that you owed so many things to my father; and so I thought perhaps—

GINA. But we didn't get the duck from Mr. Werle himself.

EKD. It's Hakon Werle we have to thank for her, all the same, Gina. [*To* GREGERS.] He was shooting from a boat you see, and he brought her down. But your father's sight is not very good now. H'm; she was only wounded.

GREG. Ah! She got a couple slugs in her body, I suppose.

HIAL. Yes, two or three.

HED. She was hit under the wing so that she couldn't fly.

GREG. And I suppose she dived to the bottom, eh?

EKD. [*sleepily, in a thick voice*]. Of course. Always do that, wild ducks do. They shoot to the bottom as deep as they can get, sir—and bite themselves fast in the tangle and seaweed—and all the devil's own mess that grows down there. And they never come up again.

GREG. But your wild duck came up again, Lieutenant Ekdal.

EKD. He had such an amazingly clever dog, your father had. And that dog—he dived in after the duck and fetched her up again.

GREG. [*who has turned to* HIALMAR]. And then she was sent to you here?

HIAL. Not at once; at first your father took her home. But she wouldn't thrive there; so Pettersen was told to put an end to her—

EKD. [*half asleep*]. H'm—yes—Pettersen—that ass—

HIAL. [*speaking more softly*]. That was how we got her, you see; for father

knows Pettersen a little and when he heard about the wild duck he got him to hand her over to us.

GREG. And now she thrives as well as possible in the garret there?

HIAL. Yes, wonderfully well. She has got fat. You see, she has lived in there so long now that she has forgotten her natural wild life; and it all depends on that.

GREG. You are right, there, Hialmar. Be sure you never let her get a glimpse of the sky and the sea—. But I mustn't stay any longer; I think your father is asleep.

HIAL. Oh, as for that—

GREG. But, by-the-bye—you said you had a room to let—a spare room?

HIAL. Yes; what then? Do you know of anybody—?

GREG. Can *I* have that room?

HIAL. You?

GINA. Oh, no, Mr. Werle, you—

GREG. May I have the room? If so, I'll take possession first thing to-morrow morning.

HIAL. Yes, with the greatest pleasure—

GINA. But, Mr. Werle, I'm sure it's not at all the sort of room for you.

HIAL. Why, Gina! how can you say that?

GINA. Why, because the room's neither large enough nor light enough, and—

GREG. That really doesn't matter, Mrs. Ekdal.

HIAL. I call it quite a nice room, and not at all badly furnished either.

GINA. But remember the pair of them underneath.

GINA. What pair?

GINA. Well, there's one as has been a tutor.

HIAL. That's Molvik—Mr. Molvik, B. A.

GINA. And then there's a doctor, by the name of Relling.

GREG. Relling? I know him a little; he practised for a time up in Höidal.

GINA. They're a regular rackety pair, they are. As often as not, they're out on the loose in the evenings; and then they come home at all hours, and they are not always just—

GREG. One soon gets used to that sort of thing. I daresay I shall be like the wild duck—

GINA. H'm; I think you ought to sleep upon it first, anyway.

GREG. You seem very unwilling to have me in the house, Mrs. Ekdal.

GINA. Oh, no! What makes you think that?

HIAL. Well, you really behave strangely about it Gina. [*To* GREGERS.] Then I suppose you intend to remain in the town for the present?

GREG. [*putting on his overcoat*]. Yes, now I intend to remain here.

HIAL. And yet not at your father's? What do you propose to do, then?

GREG. Ah, if I only knew that, Hialmar, I shouldn't be so badly off! But when one has the misfortune to be called Gregers!— "Gregers"—and then "Werle" after it; did you ever hear of anything so hideous?

HIAL. Oh, I don't think so at all.

GREG. Ugh! Bah! I feel I should like to spit on the fellow that answers to such a name. But when a man is once for all doomed to be Gregers—Werle in this world, as I am—

HIAL. [*laughs*]. Ha, ha! If you weren't Gregers Werle, what would you like to be?

GREG. If I should choose, I should like best to be a clever dog.

GINA. A dog!

HED. [*involuntarily*]. Oh, no!

GREG. Yes, an amazingly clever dog; one that goes to the bottom after wild ducks when they dive and bite themselves fast in tangle and sea-weed, down among the ooze.

HIAL. Upon my word now, Gregers—I don't in the least know what you are driving at.

GREG. Oh, well, you might not be much the wiser if you did. It's understood, then, that I move in early to-morrow morning. [*To* GINA.] I won't give you any trouble; I do everything for myself. [*To* HIALMAR.] We will talk about the rest to-morrow.—Good-night, Mrs. Ekdal. [*Nods to* HEDVIG.] Good-night.

GINA. Good-night, Mr. Werle.

HED. Good-night.

HIAL. [*who has lighted a candle*]. Wait a moment; I must show you a light; the stairs are sure to be dark.

[GREGERS *and* HIALMAR *go out by the passage door.*]

GINA. [*looking straight before her, with her sewing in her lap.*] Wasn't that queer-like talk about wanting to be a dog.

HED. Do you know mother—I believe he meant something quite different by that.

GINA. Why, what should he mean?

HED. Oh, I don't know; but it seemed to me he meant something different from what he said—all the time.

GINA. Do you think so? Yes, it was sort of queer.

HIAL. [*comes back.*] The lamp was still burning. [*Puts out the candle and sets it down.*] Ah, now one can get a mouthful of food at last. [*Begins to eat the bread and butter.*] Well, you see, Gina—if only you keep your eyes open—

GINA. How keep your eyes open—?

HIAL. Why, haven't we at last had the luck to get the room let? And just think—to a person like Gregers—a good old friend.

GINA. Well, I don't know what to say about it.

HED. Oh, mother, you'll see; it'll be such fun!

HIAL. You're very strange. You were so bent upon getting the room let before; and now you don't like it.

GINA. Yes I do, Ekdal; if it had only been to someone else— But what do you suppose Mr. Werle will say?

HIAL. Old Werle? It doesn't concern him.

GINA. But surely you can see that there's something amiss between them again, or the young man wouldn't be leaving home. You know very well those two can't get on with each other.

HIAL. Very likely not, but—

GINA. And now Mr. Werle may fancy it's you that has edged him on—

HIAL. Let him fancy so, then! Mr. Werle has done a great deal for me; far be it from me to deny it. But that doesn't make me ever-lastingly dependent upon him.

GINA. But my dear Ekdal, maybe grandfather'll suffer for it. He may lose the little bit of work he gets from Graberg.

HIAL. I could almost say: so much the better! Is it not humiliating for a man like me to see his grey-haired father treated as a pariah? But now I believe the fulness of time is at hand. [*Takes a fresh piece of bread and but-*

ter.] As sure as I have a mission in life, I mean to fulfil it now!

HED. Oh, yes, father, do!

GINA. Hush! Don't wake him!

HIAL. [*more softly.*] I will fulfil it, I say. The day shall come when— And that is why I say it's a good thing we have let the room; for that makes me more independent. The man who has a mission in life must be independent. [*By the arm-chair, with emotion.*] Poor old white-haired father! Rely on your Hialmar. He has broad shoulders—strong shoulders, at any rate. You shall yet wake up some fine day and—[*To* GINA.] Do you not believe it?

GINA [*rising*]. Yes, of course I do; but in the meantime suppose we see about getting him to bed.

HIAL. Yes, come.

[*They take hold of the old man carefully.*]

ACT III

SCENE—HIALMAR EKDAL'S *studio. It is morning; the daylight shines through the large window in the slanting roof; the curtain is drawn back.*

[HIALMAR *is sitting at the table, busy retouching a photograph; several others lie before him. Presently* GINA *wearing her hat and cloak, enters by the passage door; she has a covered basket on her arm.*]

HIAL. Back already, Gina.

GINA. Oh, yes, one can't let the grass grow under one's feet.

[*Sets her basket on a chair and takes off her things.*]

HIAL. Did you look in at Greger's room?

GINA. Yes, that I did. It's a rare sight, I can tell you; he's made a pretty mess to start off with.

HIAL. How so?

GINA. He was determined to do everything for himself, he said; so he sets to work to light the stove, and what must he do but screw down the damper till the whole room is full of smoke. Ugh! There was a smell fit to—

HIAL. Well, really!

GINA. But that's not the worst of it; for then he thinks he'll put out the fire, and goes and empties his water-jug into the stove, and so makes the whole floor one filthy puddle.

HIAL. How annoying!

GINA. I've got the porter's wife to clear up after him, pig that he is! But the room won't be fit to live in til' the afternoon.

HIAL. What's he doing with himself in the meantime?

GINA. He said he was going out for a little while.

HIAL. I looked in upon him, too, for a moment—after you had gone.

GINA. So I heard. You've asked him to lunch.

HIAL. Just to a little bit of early lunch, you know. It's his first day—we can hardly do less. You've got something in the house, I suppose?

GINA. I shall have to find something or other.

HIAL. And don't cut it too fine, for I fancy Relling and Molvik are coming up, too. I just happened to meet Relling on the stairs, you see; so I had to—

GINA. Oh, are we to have those two as well?

HIAL. Good Lord—a couple more or less can't make any difference.

OLD EKDAL [*opens his door and looks in*]. I say Hialmar— [*Sees* GINA.] Oh!

GINA. Do you want anything grandfather?

EKD. Oh, no, it doesn't matter. H'm! [*Retires again.*]

GINA [*takes up the basket*]. Be sure you see that he doesn't go out.

HIAL. All right, all right. And, Gina, a little herring-salad wouldn't be a bad idea; Relling and Molvik were out on the loose again last night.

GINA. If only they don't come before I'm ready for them—

HIAL. No, of course they won't; take your own time.

GINA. Very well, and meanwhile you can be working a bit.

HIAL. Well, I am working! I am working as hard as I can!

GINA. Then you'll have that job off your hands, you see.

[*She goes out to the kitchen with her basket.* HIALMAR *sits for a time pencilling away at the photograph, in an indolent and listless manner.*]

EKD. [*peeps in, looks round the studio, and says softly*]; Are you busy?

HIAL. Yes, I'm toiling at these wretched pictures—

EKD. Well, well, never mind,—since you're so busy—h'm!

[*He goes out again; the door stands open.*]

HIAL. [*continues for some time in silence; then he lays down his brush and goes over to the door*]. Are you busy, father?

EKD. [*in a grumbling tone, within.*] I you're busy, I'm busy, too. H'm!

HIAL. Oh, very well, then.

[*Goes to his work again.*]

EKD. [*presently, coming to the door again*]. H'm; I say, Hialmar, I'm not very busy, you know.

HIAL. I thought you were writing.

EKD. Oh, devil take it! Can't Graberg wait a day or two? After all, it's not a matter of life and death.

HIAL. No; and your not his slave either.

EKD. And about that other business in there—

HIAL. Just what I was thinking of. Do you want to go in? Shall I open the door for you?

EKD. Well, it wouldn't be a bad notion.

HIAL. [*rises*]. Then we'd have that off our hands.

EKD. Yes, exactly. It's got to be ready first thing to-morrow. It is to-morrow, isn't it? H'm?

HIAL. Yes, of course it's to-morrow.

[HIALMAR *and* EKDAL *push aside each his half of the sliding door. The morning sun is shining in through the skylights; some doves are flying about; others sit cooing upon the perches; the hens are heard clucking now and then, further back in the garret.*]

HIAL. There; now you can get to work, father.

EKD. [*goes in*]. Aren't you coming, too?

HIAL. Well, really, do you know—I almost think—[*Sees* GINA *at the kitchen door.*] I? No; I haven't time; I must work— But now for our new contrivance—

[*He pulls a cord, a curtain slips down inside, the lower part consisting of a piece of old sail cloth, the upper part of a stretched fishing net. The floor of the garret is thus no longer visible.*]

HIAL. [*goes to the table*]. So! Now, perhaps I can sit in peace for a little while.

GINA. Is he rampaging in there again?

HIAL. Would you rather have him slip down to Madam Eriksen's? [*Seats himself*]. Do you want anything? You know you said—

GINA. I only wanted to ask if you think we can lay the table for lunch here?

HIAL. Yes, we have no early appointment, I suppose?

GINA. No, I expect no one to-day except those two sweethearts that are to be taken together.

HIAL. Why the deuce couldn't they be taken together another day?

GINA. Don't you know, I told them to come in the afternoon, when you are having your nap.

HIAL. Oh, that's capital. Very well, let us have lunch here then.

GINA. All right; but there's no hurry about laying the cloth; you can have the table for a good while yet.

HIAL. Do you think I am not sticking at my work? I'm at it as hard as I can!

GINA. Then you'll be free later on, you know.

[*Goes out into the kitchen again. Short pause.*]

EKD. [*in the garret doorway, behind the net*]. Hialmar!

HIAL. Well?

EKD. Afraid we shall have to move the water-trough, after all.

HIAL. What else have I been saying all along?

EKD. H'm—h'm—h'm.

[*Goes away from the door again.* HIALMAR *goes on working a little; glances towards the garret and half rises.* HEDVIG *comes in from the kitchen.*]

HIAL. [*sits down again hurriedly*]. What do you want?

HED. I only wanted to come in beside you, father.

HIAL. [*after a pause*]. What makes you go prying around like that? Perhaps you are told off to watch me?

HED. No, no.

HIAL. What is your mother doing out there?

HED. Oh, mother's in the middle of making the herring-salad. [*Goes to the table*]. Isn't there any little thing I could help you with, father?

HIAL. Oh, no. It is right that I should bear the whole burden—so long as my strength holds out. Set your mind at rest, Hedvig; if only your father keeps his health—

HED. Oh, no father! You mustn't talk in that horrid way.

[*She wanders about a little, stops by the doorway and looks into the garret.*]

HIAL. Tell me, what is he doing?

HED. I think he's making a new path to the water-trough.

HIAL. He can never manage that by himself! And here am I doomed to sit—!

HED. [*goes to him*]. Let me take the brush father; I can do it, quite well.

HIAL. Oh, nonsense; you will only hurt your eyes.

HED. Not a bit. Give me the brush.

HIAL. [*rising*]. Well, it won't take more than a minute or two.

HED. Pooh, what harm can it do then? [*Takes the brush.*] There! [*Seats herself.*] I can begin upon this one.

HIAL. But mind you don't hurt your eyes! Do you hear? *I* won't be answerable; you do it on your own responsibility—understand that.

HED. [*retouching*]. Yes, yes, I understand.

HIAL. You are quite clever at it Hedvig. Only a minute or two, you know.

[*He slips through by the edge of he curtain into the garret.* HEDVIG *sits t her work.* HIALMAR *and* EKDAL *are eard disputing inside.*]

HIAL. [*appears behind the net*]. I ay, Hedvig—give me those pincers hat are lying on the shelf. And the hisel. [*Turns away inside.*] Now you hall see, father. Just let me show you rst what I mean!

[HEDVIG *has fetched the required ols from the shelf, and hands them him through the net.*]

HIAL. Ah, thanks. I didn't come a oment too soon.

[*Goes back from the curtain again; ey are heard carpentering and talking side.* HEDVIG *stands looking in at em. A moment later there is a knock the passage door; she does not no- ce it.*]

GREGERS WERLE [*bareheaded, in in- oor dress, enters and stops near the oor*]. H'm—!

HED. [*turns and goes towards him*]. ood morning. Please come in.

GREG. Thank you. [*Looking towards e garret.*] You seem to have work eople in the house.

HED. No, it's only father and grand- ther. I'll tell them you are here.

GREG. No, no, don't do that; I would ther wait a little. [*Seats himself on e sofa.*]

HED. It looks so untidy here—

[*Begins to clear away the photo- aphs.*]

GREG. Oh, don't take them away. Are ose prints that have to be finished ?

HED. Yes, they are a few I was ping father with.

GREG. Please don't let me disturb u.

HED. Oh, no.

[*She gathers the things to her and sits down to work;* GREGERS *looks at her meanwhile in silence.*

GREG. Did the wild duck sleep well last night.

HED. Yes, I think so, thanks.

GREG. [*turning towards the garret.*] It looks quite different by day from what it did last night in the moonlight.

HED. Yes, it changes ever so much. It looks different in the morning and in the afternoon; and it's different on rainy day from what it is in fine weather.

GREG. Have you noticed it?

HED. Yes, how could I help it?

GREG. Are you too fond of being in there with the wild duck?

HED. Yes, when I can manage it—

GREG. But I suppose you haven't much spare time; you go to school, no doubt.

HED. No, not now; father is afraid of my hurting my eyes.

GREG. Oh; then he reads with you himself?

HED. Father has promised to read with me; but he has never had time yet.

GREG. Then is there nobody else to give you a little help?

HED. Yes, there is Mr. Molvik; but he is not always exactly—quite—

GREG. Sober?

HED. Yes, I suppose that's it!

GREG. Why, then you must have any amount of time on your hands. And in there I suppose it is a sort of world by itself?

HED. Oh, yes, quite. And there are such lots of wonderful things.

GREG. Indeed?

HED. Yes, there are big cupboards

full of books; and a great many of the books have pictures in them.

GREG. Aha!

HED. And there's an old bureau with drawers and flaps, and a big clock with figures that go out and in. But the clock isn't going now.

GREG. So time has come to a standstill in there—in the wild duck's domain.

HED. Yes. And then there's an old paintbox and things of that sort; and all the books.

GREG. And you read the books, I suppose?

HED. Oh, yes, when I get the chance. Most of them are English though, and I don't understand English. But then I look at the pictures—There is one great book called "Harrison's History of London." It must be a hundred years old; and there are such heaps of pictures in it. At the beginning there is Death with an hour-glass and a woman. I think that is horrid. But then there are all the other pictures of churches, and castles, and streets, and great ships sailing on the sea.

GREG. But tell me, where did all those wonderful things come from?

HED. Oh, an old sea captain once lived here, and he brought them home with him. They used to call him "The Flying Dutchman." That was curious, because he wasn't a Dutchman at all.

GREG. Was he not?

HED. No. But at last he was drowned at sea; and so he left all those things behind him.

GREG. Tell me now—when you are sitting in there looking at the pictures, don't you wish you could travel and see the real world for yourself?

HED. Oh, no! I mean always to stay at home and help father and mother.

GREG. To retouch photographs?

HED. No, not only that. I should love above everything to learn to engrave pictures like those in the English books.

GREG. H'm. What does your father say to that?

HED. I don't think father likes it; father is strange about such things. Only think, he talks of my learning basket-making, and straw plaiting! But I don't think that would be much good.

GREG. Oh, no, I don't think so either.

HED. But father was right in saying that if I had learnt basket-making I could have made the new basket for the wild duck.

GREG. So you could; and it was you that ought to have done it, wasn't it?

HED. Yes, for it's my wild duck.

GREG. Of course it is.

HED. Yes, it belongs to me. But I lend it to father and grandfather as often as they please.

GREG. Indeed? What do they do with it?

HED. Oh, they look after it, and build places for it and so on.

GREG. I see; for no doubt the wild duck is by far the most distinguished inhabitant of the garret?

HED. Yes, indeed she is; for she is a real wild fowl, you know. And then she is so much to be pitied; she has no one to care for, poor thing.

GREG. She has no family, as the rabbits have—

HED. No. The hens too, many of them, were chickens together; but she has been taken right away from all her friends. And then there is so much that is strange about the wild duck. No

ody knows her, and nobody knows here she came from either.

GREG. And she has been down in the epths of the sea.

HED. [*with a quick glance at him, epresses a smile and asks*]: Why do ou say "depths of the sea"?

GREG. What else should I say?

HED. You could say "the bottom of ie sea."

GREG. Oh, mayn't I just as well say ie depths of the sea?

HED. Yes; but it sounds so strange me when other people speak of the pths of the sea.

GREG. Why so? Tell me why?

HED. No, I won't; it's so stupid.

GREG. Oh, no, I am sure it's not. o tell me why you smiled.

HED. Well, this is the reason; when- er I come to realise suddenly—in a ish—what is in there, it always seems me that the whole room and every- ing in it should be called "the depths the sea."—But that is so stupid.

GREG. You mustn't say that.

HED. Oh, yes, for you know it is ly a garret.

GREG. [*looks fixedly at her*]. Are u so sure of that?

HED. [*astonished*]. That it's a gar- ?

GREG. Are you quite certain of it?

[HEDVIG *is silent and looks at him en-mouthed.* GINA *comes in from the chen with the table things.*]

[HEDVIG *is silent and looks at him en-mouthed.* GINA *comes in from kitchen with the table things.*]

GREG. [*rising*]. I have come in upon u too early.

GINA. Oh, you must be somewhere; l we're nearly ready now, anyway. ar the table, Hedvig.

[HEDVIG *clears away her things; she and* GINA *lay the cloth during what follows.* GREGERS *seats himself in the arm-chair and turns over an album.*]

GREG. I hear you can retouch, Mrs. Ekdal.

GINA [*with a side glance*]. Yes, I can.

GREG. That was exceedingly lucky?

GINA. How—lucky?

GREG. Since Ekdal took to photography, I mean.

HED. Mother can take photographs, too.

GINA. Oh, yes; I was bound to learn that.

GREG. So it is really you that carry on the business, I suppose?

GINA. Yes, when Ekdal hasn't time himself—

GREG. He is a great deal taken up with his old father, I daresay.

GINA. Yes; and then you can't expect a man like Ekdal to do nothing but take car-de-visits of Dick, Tom and Harry.

GREG. I quite agree with you; but having once gone in for the thing—

GINA. You can surely understand, Mr. Werle, that Edkal's not like one of your common photographers.

GREG. Of course not, but still——

[*A shot is fired within the garret.*]

GREG. [*starting up*]. What's that?

GINA. Ugh! now they're firing again!

GREG. Have they firearms in there?

HED. They are out shooting.

GREG. What! [*At the door of the garret.*] Are you shooting Hialmar?

HIAL. [*inside the net*]. Are you there? I didn't know; I was so taken up—— [*To* HEDVIG.) Why did you not let us know?

[*Comes into the studio.*]

GREG. Do you go shooting in the garret?

HIAL. [*showing a double-barrelled pistol*]. Oh, only with this thing.

GINA. Yes, you and grandfather will do yourselves a mischief some day with that there pigstol.

HIAL. [*with irritation*]. I believe I have told you that this kid of firearm is called a pistol.

GINA. Oh, that doesn't make it much better that I can see.

GREG. So you have become a sportsman, too, Hialmar?

HIAL. Only a little rabbit-shooting now and then. Mostly to please father, you understand.

GINA. Men are strange beings; they must always have something to pervert theirselves with.

HIAL. [*snappishly*]. Just so; we must always have something to divert ourselves with.

GINA. Yes, that's just what I say.

HIAL. H'm. [*To* GREGERS]. You see the garret is fortunately so situated that no one can hear us shooting. [*Lays the pistol on the top shelf of the bookcase.*] Don't touch the pistol, Hedvig! One of the barrels is loaded; remember that.

GREG. [*looking through the net*]. You have a fowling-piece too, I see.

HIAL. That is father's old gun. It's of no use now. Something has gone wrong with the lock. But it's fun to have it all the same; for we can take it to pieces now and then, and clean and grease it, and screw it together again.—Of course, it's mostly father that fiddle-faddles with all that sort of thing.

HED. [*beside* GREGERS]. Now you can see the wild duck properly.

GREG. I was just looking at her. One of her wings seems to me to droop a bit.

HED. Well, no wonder; her wing was broken, you know.

GREG. And she trails one foot a little. Isn't that so?

HIAL. Perhaps a very little bit.

HED. Yes, it was by that foot the dog took hold of her.

HIAL. But otherwise she hasn't the least thing the matter with her; and that is simply marvellous for a creature that has a charge of shot in her body and has been between a dog's teeth——

GREG. [*with a glance at* HEDVIG]—— and that has lain in the depths of the sea—so long.

HED. [*smiling*]. Yes.

GINA [*laying the table*]. That blessed wild duck! What a lot of fuss you do make over her.

HIAL. H'm;—will lunch soon be ready?

GINA. Yes, directly. Hedvig, you must come and help me now.

[GINA *and* HEDVIG *go out into the kitchen.*]

HIAL. [*in a low voice*]. I think you had better not stand there looking in at father; he doesn't like it. [GREGERS *moves away from the garret door.*] Besides, I may as well shut up before the others come. [*Claps his hands to drive the fowls back.*] Shh—shh, in with you! [*Draws up the curtain and pulls the doors together.*] All the contrivances are my own invention. It's really quite amusing to have things of this sort to potter with, and to put to rights when they get out of order. And it's absolutely necessary, too; for

ina objects to having rabbits and owls in the studio.

GREG. To be sure; and I suppose the udio is your wife's special depart-ent?

HIAL. As a rule, I leave the every-ıy details of business to her; for then can take refuge in the parlour and ve my mind to more important things.

GREG. What things may they be, ialmar?

HIAL. I wonder you have not asked at question sooner. But perhaps you ıven't heard of the invention?

GREG. The invention? No.

HIAL. Really? Have you not? Oh, , out there in the wilds——

GREG. So you have invented some-ing, have you?

HIAL. It is not quite completed yet; t I am working at it. You can easily agine that when I resolved to de-te myself to photography, it wasn't mply with the idea of taking like-sses of all sorts of commonplace ople.

GREG. No; your wife was saying e same thing just now.

HIAL. I swore that if I concentrated powers to this handicraft, I would exalt it that it should become both art and a science. And to that end letermined to make this great inven-n.

GREG. And what is the nature of the vention? What purpose does it ve?

HIAL. Oh, my dear fellow, you istn't ask for details yet. It takes ne, you see. And you must not think it my motive is vanity. It is not for own sake that I am working. Oh, ; it is my life's mission that stands ore me night and day.

GREG. What is your life's mission?

HIAL. Do you forget the old man with the silver hair?

GREG. Your poor father? Well, but what can you do for him?

HIAL. I can raise up his self-respect from the dead, by restoring the name of Ekdal to honour and dignity.

GREG. Then that is your life's mission?

HIAL. Yes. I will rescue the shipwrecked man. For shipwrecked he was, by the very first blast of the storm. Even while those terrible investigations were going on, he was no longer himself. That pistol there—the one we used to shoot rabbits with—has played its part in the tragedy of the house of Ekdal.

GREG. The pistol? Indeed?

HIAL. When the sentence of imprisonment was passed—he had the pistol in his hand—

GREG. Had he——?

HIAL. Yes; but he dared not use it. His courage failed him. So broken, so demoralised was he even then! Oh, can you understand it? He, a soldier; he, who had shot nine bears, and who was descended from two lieutenant-colonels—one after the other, of course. Can you understand it, Gregers?

GREG. Yes, I understand it well enough.

HIAL. I cannot. And once more the pistol played a part in the history of our house. When he had put on the grey clothes and was under lock and key—oh, that was a terrible time for me, I can tell you. I kept the blinds drawn down over both my windows. When I peeped out, I saw the sun shining as if nothing had happened.

I could not understand it. I saw people going along the street, laughing and talking about indifferent things. I could not understand it. It seemed to me that the whole of existence must be at a standstill—as if under an eclipse.

GREG. I felt that, too, when my mother died.

HIAL. It was in such an hour that Hialmar Ekdal pointed the pistol at his own breast.

GREG. You, too, thought of——!

HIAL. Yes.

GREG. But you did not fire?

HIAL. No. At the decisive moment I won the victory over myself. I remained in life. But I can assure you it takes some courage to choose life under circumstances like those.

GREG. Well, that depends on how you look at it.

HIAL. Yes, indeed, it takes courage. But I am glad I was firm: for now I shall soon perfect my invention; and Dr. Relling thinks, as I do mysef, that father may be allowed to wear his uniform again. I will demand that as my sole reward.

GREG. So that is what he meant about his uniform——?

HIAL. Yes, that is what he most yearns for. You can't think how my heart bleeds for him. Every time we celebrate any little family festival—Gina's and my wedding-day, or whatever it may be—in comes the old man in the lieutenant's uniform of happier days. But if he only hears a knock at the door—for he daren't show himself to strangers you know—he hurries back to his room again as fast as his old legs can carry him. Oh, it's heart-rending for a son to see such things!

GREG. How long do you think it wil take you to finish your invention?

HIAL. Come now, you mustn't ex pect me to enter into particulars lik that. An invention is not a thing com pletely under one's own control. It de pends largely on inspiration—on intui tion—and it is almost impossible t predict when the inspiration may come

GREG. But it's advancing?

HIAL. Yes, certainly, it is advanc ing. I turn it over in my mind ever day; I am full of it. Every afternoon when I have had my dinner, I shut my self up in the parlour, where I ca ponder undisturbed. But I can't b goaded to it; it's not a bit of good Relling says so, too.

GREG. And you don't think that a that business in the garret draws yo off and distracts you too much?

HIAL. No, no, no; quite the contrary You mustn't say that. I cannot be ever lastingly absorbed in the same labori ous train of thought. I must hav something alongside of it to fill up th time of waiting. The inspiration, th intuition, you see—when it comes, comes, and there's an end of it.

GREG. My dear Hialmar, I almos think you have something of the wil duck in you.

HIAL. Something of the wild duck How do you mean?

GREG. You have dived down an bitten yourself fast in the unde growth.

HIAL. Are you alluding to th well-nigh fatal shot that has broke my father's wing—and mine, too?

GREG. Not exactly to that. I don say that your wing has been broke but you have strayed into a poisono marsh, Hialmar; an insidious disea

as taken hold of you, and you have unk down to die in the dark.

HIAL. I? To die in the dark? ook here, Gregers, you must really eave off talking such nonsense.

GREG. Don't be afraid; I shall find way to help you up again. I, too, ave a mission in life now; I found it esterday.

HIAL. That's all very well; but ou will please leave me out of it. I an assure you that—apart from my ery natural melancholy, of course—I m as contented as any one can wish o be.

GREG. Your contentment is an ef- ect of the marsh poison.

HIAL. Now, my dear Gregers, pray o not go on about disease and poison; am not used to that sort of talk. In ıy house nobody ever speaks to me ɔout unpleasant things.

GREG. Ah, that I can easily believe.

HIAL. It's not good for me, you see. nd there are no marsh poisons here, s you express it. The poor photo- apher's roof is lowly, I know—and y circumstances are narrow. But I n an inventor, and I am the bread- inner of a family. That exalts me ɔove my mean surroundings.—Ah, ere comes lunch!

*(*GINA *and* HEDVIG *bring bottles of e, a decanter of brandy, glasses, etc. t the same time,* RELLING *and* MOLVIK *ter from the passage; they are both thout hat or overcoat.* MOLVIK *is essed in black.*

GINA [*placing the things upon the ble*]. Ah, you two have come in the k of time.

RELL. Molvik got it into his head at he could smell herring-salad, and then there was no holding him.—Good morning again, Ekdal.

HIAL. Gregers, let me introduce you to Mr. Molvik—Doctor—Oh, you know Relling, don't you?

GREG. Yes, slightly.

RELL. Oh, Mr. Werle, junior! Yes, we two have had one or two little skirmishes up at the Höidal works. You've just moved in?

GREG. I moved in this morning.

RELL. Molvik and I live right under you; so you haven't far to go for the doctor and the clergyman, if you should need anything in that line.

GREG. Thanks, it's not quite unlikely; for yesterday we were thirteen at table.

HIAL. Oh, come now, don't let us get upon unpleasant subjects again!

RELL. You may make your mind easy, Ekdal; I'll be hanged if the finger of fate points to you.

HIAL. I should hope not, for the sake of my family. But let us sit down now, and eat and drink and be merry.

GREG. Shall we not wait for your father?

HIAL. No, his lunch will be taken in to him later. Come along!

[*The men seat themselves at table, and eat and drink.* GINA *and* HEDVIG *go in and out and wait upon them.*]

RELL. Molvik was frightfully screwed yesterday, Mrs. Ekdal.

GINA. Really? Yesterday again?

RELL. Didn't you hear him when I brought him home last night?

GINA. No, I can't say I did.

RELL. That was a good thing, for Molvik was disgusting last night.

GINA. Is that true, Molvik?

MOLVIK. Let us draw a veil over last night's proceedings. That sort of

thing is totally foreign to my better self.

RELL. [*To* GREGERS]. It comes over him like a sort of possession, and then I have to go out on the loose with him. Mr. Molvik is daemonic, you see.

GREG. Daemonic?

RELL. Molvik is daemonic, yes.

GREG. H'm.

RELL. And daemonic natures are not made to walk straight through the world; they must meander a little now and then.—Well, so you still stick up there at those horrible grimy works?

GREG. I have stuck there until now.

RELL. And did you ever manage to collect that claim you went about presenting?

GREG. Claim? [*Understands him.*] Ah, I see.

HIAL. Have you been presenting claims, Gregers?

GREG. Oh, nonsense.

RELL. Faith, but he has, though! He went round to all the cottars' cabins presenting something he called "the claim of the ideal."

GREG. I was young then.

RELL. You're right; you were very young. And as for the claim of the ideal—you never got it honoured while *I* was up there.

GREG. Nor since either.

RELL. Ah, then you've learnt to knock a little discount off, I expect.

GREG. Never, when I have a true man to deal with.

HIAL. No, I should think not, indeed. A little butter, Gina.

RELL. And a slice of bacon for Molvik.

MOLVIK. Ugh! not bacon!

[*A knock at the garret door.*]

HIAL. Open the door, Hedvig; father wants to come out.

[HEDVIG *goes over and opens the door a little way;* EKDAL *enters with a fresh rabbit-skin; she closes the door after him.*]

EKD. Good morning, gentlemen! Good sport today. Shot a big one.

HIAL. And you've gone and skinned it without waiting for me——!

EKD. Salted it, too. It's good tender meat, is rabbit; it's sweet; it tastes like sugar. Good appetite to you, gentlemen!

[*Goes into his room.*]

MOLVIK [*rising*]. Excuse me——; I can't——; I must get downstairs immediately——

RELL. Drink some soda water, man.

MOLVIK [*hurrying away*]. Ugh—ugh. [*Goes out by the passage door.*]

RELL. [*to* HIALMAR]. Let us drain a glass to the old hunter.

HIAL. [*clinks glasses with him*]. To the undaunted sportsman who has looked death in the face!

RELL. To the grey-haired——[*Drinks.*] By-the-by, is his hair grey or white?

HIAL. Something between the two I fancy; for that matter, he has very few hairs left of any colour.

RELL. Well, well, one can get through the world with a wig. After all, you are a happy man, Ekdal; you have your noble mission to labour for——

HIAL. And I do labour, I can tell you.

RELL. And then you have your excellent wife, shuffling quietly in and out in her felt slippers, with that see-saw walk of hers, and making everything cosy and comfortable about you.

HIAL. Yes, Gina—[*nods to her*]—ou were a good helpmate on the path f life.

GINA. Oh, don't sit there cricketis-ıg me.

RELL. And your Hedvig, too, Ekdal!

HIAL. [*affected*]. The child, yes! The child before everything! Hedvig, ome here to me. [*Strokes her hair.*] What day is it to-morrow, eh?

HED. [*Shaking him*]. Oh, no, ou're not to say anything, father.

HIAL. It cuts me to the heart when think what a poor affair it will be; nly a little festivity in the garret—

HED. Oh, but that's just what I ke!

RELL. Just you wait till the wonder-il invention sees the light. Hedvig!

HIAL. Yes, indeed—then you shall ee——! Hedvig, I have resolved to ake your future secure. You shall ve in comfort all your days. I will emand—something or other—on your ehalf. That shall be the poor in-ntor's sole reward.

HED. [*whispering, with her arms ound his neck*]. Oh, you dear, kind ather!

RELL. [*to* GREGERS]. Come now, on't you find it pleasant, for once in way, to sit at a well-spread table in a appy family circle?

HIAL. Ah, yes, I really prize these cial hours.

GREG. For my part, I don't thrive marsh vapours.

RELL. Marsh vapours?

HIAL. Oh, don't begin with that uff again!

GINA. Goodness knows there's no apours in this house, Mr. Werle; I give the place a good airing every blessed day.

GREG. [*leaves the table*]. No airing you can give will drive out the taint I mean.

HIAL. Taint!

GINA. Yes, what do you say to that, Ekdal!

RELL. —Excuse me—may it not be you yourself that have brought the taint from those mines up there?

GREG. It is like you to call what I bring into this house a taint.

RELL. [*goes up to him*]. Look here, Mr. Werle, junior: I have a strong suspicion that you are still carrying about that "claim of the ideal" large as life, in your coat-tail pocket.

GREG. I carry it in my breast.

RELL. Well, wherever you carry it, I advise you not to come dunning us with it here, so long as *I* am on the premises.

GREG. And if I do so none the less?

RELL. Then you'll go head-foremost down the stairs; now I've warned you.

HIAL. [*rising*]. Oh, but Relling—!

GREG. Yes, you may turn me out—

GINA [*interposing between them*]. We can't have that, Relling. But I must say, Mr. Werle, it ill becomes you to talk about vapours and taints, after all the mess you made with your stove. [*A knock at the passage door*].

HED. Mother, there's somebody knocking.

HIAL. There now, we're going to have a whole lot of people!

GINA. I'll go—— [*Goes over and opens the door, starts, and draws back*]. Oh— oh, dear!

[WERLE, *in a fur coat, advances one step into the room.*]

WER. Excuse me; but I think my son is staying here.

GINA [*with a gulp*]. Yes.

HIAL. [*approaching him*]. Won't you do us the honour to——?

WER. Thank you, I merely wish to speak to my son.

GREG. What is it? Here I am.

WER. I want a few words with you, in your room.

GREG. In my room? Very well—— [*About to go.*]

GINA. No, no, your room's not in a fit state—

WER. Well then, out in the passage here; I want to have a few words with you alone.

HIAL. You can have them here, sir. Come into the parlour, Relling.

[HIALMAR *and* RELLING *go off to the right,* GINA *takes* HEDVIG *with her into the kitchen.*]

GREG. [*after a short pause*]. Well, now we are alone.

WER. From something you let fall last evening, and from your coming to lodge with the Ekdals, I can't help inferring that you intend to make yourself unpleasant to me, in one way or another.

GREG. I intend to open Hialmar Ekdal's eyes. He shall see his position as it really is—that is all.

WER. Is that the mission in life you spoke of yesterday?

GREG. Yes. You have left me no other.

WER. Is it I, then, that have crippled your mind, Gregers?

GREG. You have crippled my whole life. I am not thinking of all that about mother——But it's thanks to you that I am continually haunted and harassed by a guilty conscience.

WER. Indeed! It is your conscience that troubles you, is it?

GREG. I ought to have taken a stand against you when the trap was set for Lieutenant Ekdal. I ought to have cautioned him; for I had a misgiving as to what was in the wind.

WER. Yes, that was the time to have spoken.

GREG. I did not dare to, I was so cowed and spiritless. I was mortally afraid of you—not only then, but long afterwards.

WER. You have got over that fear now, it appears.

GREG. Yes, fortunately. The wrong done to old Ekdal, both by me and by—others, can never be undone; but Hialmar I can rescue from all the falsehood and deception that are bringing him to ruin.

WER. Do you think that will be doing him a kindness?

GREG. I have not the least doubt of it.

WER. You think our worthy photographer is the sort of man to appreciate such friendly offices?

GREG. Yes, I do.

WER. H'm—we shall see.

GREG. Besides, if I am to go on living, I must try to find some cure for my sick conscience.

WER. It will never be sound. Your conscience has been sickly from childhood. That is a legacy from your mother, Gregers—the only one she left you.

GREG. [*with a scornful half-smile*] Have you not yet forgiven her for the mistake you made in supposing she would bring you a fortune?

WER. Don't let us wander from the point. Then you hold to your purpose

f setting young Ekdal upon what you magine to be the right scent?

GREG. Yes, that is my fixed resolve.

WER. Well, in that case I might have pared myself this visit; for, of course, t is useless to ask whether you will eturn home with me?

GREG. Quite useless.

WER. And I suppose you won't en-er the firm either?

GREG. No.

WER. Very good. But as I am hinking of marrying again, your share n the property will fall to you at nce.

GREG. [*quickly*]. No, I do not want hat.

WER. You don't want it.

GREG. No, I dare not take it, for onscience' sake.

WER. [*after a pause*]. Are you oing up to the works again?

GREG. No; I consider myself re-eased from your service.

WER. But what are you going to o?

GREG. Only to fulfil my mission; othing more.

WER. Well, but afterwards? What re you going to live upon?

GREG. I have laid by a little out of y salary.

WER. How long will that last?

GREG. I think it will last my time.

WER. What do you mean?

GREG. I shall answer no more ques-ons.

WER. Good-bye then, Gregers.

GREG. Good-bye.

[*Werle goes.*]

HIAL. [*peeping in*]. He's gone, n't he?

GREG. Yes.

HIALMAR *and* RELLING *enter; also* GINA *and* HEDVIG *from the kitchen,*

RELL. That luncheon-party was a failure.

GREG. Put on your coat, Hialmar; I want you to come for a long walk with me.

HIAL. With pleasure. What was it your father wanted? Had it anything to do with me?

GREG. Come along. We must have a talk. I'll go and put on my overcoat.

[*Goes out by the passage door.*]

GINA. You shouldn't go out with him Ekdal.

RELL. No, don't you do it. Stay where you are.

HIAL. [*gets his hat and overcoat.*] Oh, nonsense! When a friend of my youth feels impelled to open his mind to me in private—

RELL. But devil take it—don't you see that the fellow's mad, cracked, demented!

GINA. There, what did I tell you! His mother before him had crazy fits like that sometimes.

HAIL. The more need for a friend's watchful eye. [*To* GINA.] Be sure you have dinner ready in good time. Good-bye for the present.

[*Goes out by the passage door.*]

RELL. It's a thousand pities the fellow didn't go to hell through one of the Höidal mines.

GINA. Good Lord! What makes you say that?

RELL. [*muttering*]. Oh, I have my own reasons.

GINA. Do you think young Werle is really mad?

RELL. No, worse luck; he's no madder than most other people. But one

disease he has certainly got in his system.

GINA. What is it that's the matter with him?

RELL. Well, I'll tell you, Mrs. Ekdal. He is suffering from an acute attack of integrity.

GINA. Integrity?

HED. Is that a kind of disease?

RELL. Yes, it's a national disease; but it only appears sporadically. [*Nods to* GINA.] Thanks for your hospitality.

[*He goes out by the passage door.*]

GINA. [*moving restlessly to and fro*]. Ugh, that Gregers Werle—he was always a wretched creature.

HED. [*standing by the table, and looking searchingly at her*]. I think all this is very strange.

ACT IV

SCENE—HIALMAR EKDAL'S *studio. A photograph has just been taken; a camera with the cloth over it, a pedestal, two chairs, a folding table, etc., are standing out in the room. Afternoon light; the sun is going down; a little later it begins to grow dusk.*

GINA. *stands in the passage doorway with a little box and a wet glass plate in her hand, and is speaking to somebody outside.*

GINA. Yes, certainly. When I make a promise I keep it. The first dozen shall be ready on Monday. Good afternoon.

[*Someone is heard going downstairs.* GINA *shuts the door, slips the plate into the box, and puts it into the covered camera.*]

HED. [*comes in from the kitchen*]. Are they gone?

GINA [*tidying up*]. Yes, thank goodness, I've got rid of them at last.

HED. But can you imagine why father hasn't come home yet?

GINA. Are you sure he's not down in Relling's room?

HED. No, he's not; I ran down the kitchen stair just now and asked.

GINA. And his dinner standing and getting cold, too.

HED. Yes, I can't understand it. Father's always so careful to be home to dinner!

GINA. Oh, he'll be here directly, you'll see.

HED. I wish he would come; everything seems so queer today.

GINA [*calls out*]. There he is! HIALMAR EKDAL *comes in at the passage door.*

HED. [*going to him.*] Father! Oh what a time we've been waiting for you!

GINA. [*glancing sidelong at him*] You've been out a long time, Ekdal.

HIAL. [*without looking at her*] Rather long, yes.

[*He takes off his overcoat;* GINA *and* HEDVIG *go to help him; he motions them away.*]

GINA. Perhaps you've had dinner with Werle?

HIAL. [*hanging up his coat*]. No.

GINA [*going towards the kitchen door*]. Then I'll bring some in for you.

HIAL. No; let the dinner alone. I want nothing to eat.

HED. [*going nearer to him*]. Are you not well, father?

HIAL. Well? Oh, yes, well enough. We have had a tiring walk, Gregers and I.

GINA. You didn't ought to have

one so far, Ekdal; you're not used
o it.

HIAL. H'm; there's many a thing
man must get used to in this world.
Wanders about the room.] Has any
ne been here whilst I was out?

GINA. Nobody but the two sweet-
earts.

HIAL. No new orders?

GINA. No, not today.

HED. There will be some tomorrow,
ather, you'll see.

HIAL. [*wandering about*]. There
re certains claims—what shall I call
iem?—let me say claims of the ideal
-certain obligations, which a man can-
ot disregard without injury.

HIAL. I hope there will; for tomor-
ow I am going to set to work in real
arnest.

HED. Tomorrow! Don't you re-
ember what day it is tomorrow?

HIAL. Oh, yes, by-the-bye——. Well
ie day after, then. Henceforth I
ean to do everything myself; I shall
ke all the work into my own hands.

GINA. Why, what can be the good
f that, Ekdal? It'll only make your
fe a burden to you. I can manage
ie photography all right; and you
n go on working at your invention.

HED. And think of the wild duck,
ather,—and all the hens and rabbits
nd——!

HIAL. Don't talk to me of all that
ash! From tomorrow I will never set
ot in the garret again.

HED. Oh, but father, you promised
at we should have a little party——

HIAL. H'm, true. Well, then, from
e day after tomorrow. I should al-
ost like to wring that cursed wild
uck's neck!

HED. [*shrieks.*] The wild duck!

GINA. Well I never!

HED. [*shaking him.*] Oh, no,
father; you know it's my wild duck!

HIAL. That is why I don't do it. I
haven't the heart to—for your sake,
Hedvig. But in my inmost soul I feel
that I ought to do it. I ought not to
tolerate under my roof a creature
that has been through those hands.

GINA. Why, good gracious, even if
grandfather did get it from that poor
creature, Pettersen—

HED. [*going after him*] But think
of the wild duck,—the poor wild duck!

HIAL. [*stops*]. I tell you I will
spare it—for your sake. Not a hair
of its head shall be—I mean, it shall
be spared. There are greater problems
than that to be dealt with. But you
should go out a little now, Hedvig, as
usual; it is getting dusk enough for
you now.

HED. No, I don't care about going
out now.

HIAL. Yes, do; it seems to me your
eyes are blinking a great deal; all these
vapours in here are bad for you. The
air is heavy under this roof.

HED. Very well, then, I'll run down
the kitchen stair and go for a little
walk. My cloak and hat?—oh, they're
in my own room. Father—be sure you
don't do the wild duck any harm whilst
I'm out.

HIAL. Not a feather of its head
shall be touched. [*Draws her to him.*]
You and I, Hedvig—we two——! Well,
go along.

[HED. *nods to her parents and goes
out through the kitchen.*]

HIAL. [*walks about without looking
up*]. Gina.

GINA. Yes?

HIAL. From tomorrow—or say,

from the day after tomorrow—I should like to keep the household account-book myself.

GINA. Do you want to keep the accounts too, now?

HIAL. Yes; or to check the receipts at any rate.

GINA. Lord help us; that's soon done.

HIAL. One would hardly think so; at any rate you seem to make the money go a very long way. [*Stops and looks at her.*] How do you manage it?

GINA. It's because me and Hedvig, we need so little.

HIAL. Is it the case that father is very liberally paid for the copying he does for Mr. Werle?

GINA. I don't know as he gets anything out of the way. I don't know the rates for that sort of work.

HIAL. Well, what does he get, about? Let me hear!

GINA. Oh, it varies; I daresay it'll come to about as much as he costs us, with a little pocket-money over.

HIAL. As much as he costs us! And you have never told me this before.

GINA. No, how could I tell you? It pleased you so much to think he got everything from you.

HIAL. And he gets it from Mr. Werle.

GINA. Oh, well, he has plenty and to spare, he has.

HIAL. Light the lamp for me, please!

GINA [*lighting the lamp*]. And, of course, we don't know as it's Mr. Werle himself; it may be Graberg—

HIAL. Why attempt such an evasion?

GINA. I don't know; I only thought——

HIAL. H'm!

GINA. It wasn't me that got grandfather that copying. It was Bertha, when she used to come about us.

HIAL. It seems to me your voice is trembling.

GINA [*putting the lamp-shade on*]. Is it?

HIAL. And your hands are shaking, are they not?

GINA [*firmly*]. Come right out with it, Ekdal. What has be been saying about me?

HIAL. Is it true—can it be true that—that there was an—an understanding between you and Mr. Werle, while you were in service there?

GINA. That's not true. Not at that time. Mr. Werle did come after me, that's a fact. And his wife thought there was something in it, and then she made such a hocus-pocus and hurly-burly, and she hustled me and bustled me about so that I left her service.

HIAL. But afterwards, then?

GINA. Well, then I went home. And mother—well, she wasn't the woman you took her for, Ekdal; she kept on worrying and worrying at me about one thing and another—for Mr. Werle was a widower by that time.

HIAL. Well, and then?

GINA. I suppose you've got to know it. He gave me no peace until he'd had his way.

HIAL. [*striking his hands together*] And this is the mother of my child! How could you hide this from me?

GINA. Yes, it was wrong of me; I ought certainly to have told you long ago.

HIAL. You should have told me at the very first;—then I should have known the sort of woman you were

GINA. But would you have married me all the same?

HIAL. How can you dream that I would?

GINA. That's just why I didn't dare tell you anything, then. For I'd come to care for you so much, you see; and I couldn't go and make myself utterly miserable——

HIAL. [*walks about*]. And this is my Hedvig's mother. And to know that all I see before me—[*kicks at chair*]—all that I call my home—I owe to a favoured predecessor! Oh, that scoundrel Werle!

GINA. Do you repent of the fourteen —the fifteen years we've lived together?

HIAL. [*placing himself in front of her*]. Have you not every day, every hour, repented of the spider's-web of deceit you have spun around me? Answer me that! How could you help writing with penitence and remorse?

GINA. Oh, my dear Ekdal, I've had all I could do to look after the house and get through the day's work——

HIAL. Then you never think of reviewing your past?

GINA. No; Heaven knows I'd almost forgotten those old stories.

HIAL. Oh, this dull, callous contentment! To me there is something revolting about it. Think of it—never so much as a twinge of remorse!

GINA. But tell me, Ekdal—what could have become of you if you hadn't had a wife like me?

HIAL. Like you——!

GINA. Yes; for you know I've always been a bit more practical and wide-awake than you. Of course I'm a year or two older.

HIAL. What would have become of me!

GINA. You'd got into all sorts of bad ways when first you met me; that you can't deny.

HIAL. "Bad ways" do you call them? Little do you know what a man goes through when he is in grief and despair—especially a man of my fiery temperament.

GINA. Well, well, that may be so. And I've no reason to crow over you, neither; for you turned a moral of a husband, that you did, as soon as ever you had a house and home of your own.—And now we'd got everything so nice and cosy about us; and me and Hedvig was just thinking we'd soon be able to let ourselves go a bit, in the way of both food and clothes.

HIAL. In the swamp of deceit, yes.

GINA. I wish to goodness that detestable thing had never set his foot inside our doors!

HIAL. And I, too, thought my home such a pleasant one. That was a delusion. Where shall I now find the elasticity of spirit to bring my invention into the world of reality? Perhaps it will die with me; and then it will be your past, Gina, that will have killed it.

GINA [*nearly crying*]. You mustn't say such things, Ekdal. Me, that has only wanted to do the best I could for you, all my days!

HIAL. I ask you, what becomes of the breadwinner's dream? When I used to lie in there on the sofa and brood over my invention, I had a clear enough presentiment that it would sap my vitality to the last drop. I felt even then that the day when I held the patent in my hand—that day—would

bring my—release. And then it was my dream that you should live on after me, the dead inventor's well-to-do widow.

GINA. [*drying her tears*]. No, you mustn't talk like that, Ekdal. May the Lord never let me see the day I am left a widow!

HIAL. Oh, the whole dream has vanished. It is all over now. All over!

GREGERS WERLE *opens the passage door cautiously and looks in.*

GREG. May I come in?

HIAL. Yes, come in.

GREG. [*comes forward, his face beaming with satisfaction and holds out both his hands to them*]. Well, dear friends——! [*Looks from one to the other, and whispers to* HIALMAR.] Have you not done it yet?

HIAL. [*aloud*]. It is done.

GREG. It is?

GREG. I have passed through the bitterest moments of my life.

GREG. But also, I trust, the most ennobling.

HIAL. Well, at any rate, we have got through it for the present.

GINA. God forgive you, Mr. Werle.

GREG. [*in great surprise*]. But I don't understand this.

HIAL. What don't you understand?

GREG. After so great a crisis—a crisis that is to be the starting-point of an entirely new life—of a communion founded on truth, and free from all taint of deception——

HIAL. Yes, yes, I know; I know that quite well.

GREG. I confidently expected, when I entered the room, to find the light of transfiguration shining upon me from both husband and wife. And now I see nothing but dullness, oppression, gloom——

GINA. Oh, is that it?

[*Takes off the lamp-shade.*

GREG. You will not understand me, Mrs. Ekdal. Ah, well, you, I suppose need time to—But you, Hialmar? Surely you feel a new consecration after the great crisis.

HIAL. Yes, of course I do. That is—in a sort of way.

GREG. For surely nothing in the world can compare with the joy of forgiving one who has erred, and raising her up to oneself in love.

HIAL. Do you think a man can so easily throw off the bitter cup I have drained?

GREG. No, not a common man, perhaps. But a man like you——!

HIAL. Good God! I know that well enough. But you must keep me up to it, Gregers. It takes time, you know.

GREG. You have much of the wild duck in you, Hialmar.

RELLING *has come in at the passage door.*

RELL. Oho! is the wild duck to the fore again?

HIAL. Yes; Mr. Werle's wing-broken victim.

RELL. Mr. Werle——? So it's him you are talking about?

HIAL. Him and—ourselves.

RELL. [*in an undertone to* GREGERS] May the devil fly away with you!

HIAL. What is that you are saying?

RELL. Only uttering a heartfelt wish that this quack-salver would take himself off. If he stays here, he is quite equal to making an utter mess of life for both of you.

GREG. These two will not make a mess of life, Mr. Relling. Of course

I won't speak of Hialmar—him we know. But she, too, in her innermost heart, has certainly something loyal and sincere——

GINA [*almost crying*]. You might have let me alone for what I was, then.

RELL. [*to* GREGERS]. Is it rude to ask what you really want in this house?

GREG. To lay the foundations of a true marriage.

RELL. So you don't think Ekdal's marriage is good enough as it is?

GREG. No doubt it is as good a marriage as most others, worse luck. But a true marriage it has yet to become.

HIAL. You have never had eyes for the claims of the ideal, Relling.

RELL. Rubbish, my boy!—but excuse me, Mr. Werle; how many—in round numbers—how many true marriages have you seen in the course of your life?

GREG. Scarcely a single one.

RELL. Nor I either.

GREG. But I have seen innumerable marriages of the opposite kind. And it has been my fate to see at close quarters what ruin such a marriage can work in two human souls.

HIAL. A man's whole moral basis may give away beneath his feet; that is the terrible part of it.

RELL. Well, I can't say I've ever been exactly married, so I don't pretend to speak with authority. But this I know, that the child enters into the marriage problem. And you must leave the child in peace.

HIAL. Oh—Hedvig! my poor Hedvig.

RELL. Yes, you must be good enough to keep Hedvig outside of all this. You two are grown-up people; you are free, in God's name, to make what mess and muddle you please of your life. But you must deal cautiously with Hedvig, I tell you; else you may do her a great injury.

HIAL. An injury!

RELL. Yes, or she may do herself an injury—and perhaps others, too.

GINA. How can you know that, Relling?

HIAL. Her sight is in no immediate danger, is it?

RELL. I am not talking about her sight. Hedvig is at a critical age. She may be getting all sorts of mischief into her head.

GINA. That's true—I've noticed it already! She's taken to carrying on with the fire, out in the kitchen. She calls it playing at house-on-fire. I'm often scared for fear she really sets fire to the house.

RELL. You see; I thought as much.

GREG. [*to* RELLING]. But how do you account for that?

RELL. [*sullenly*]. Her constitution's changing, sir.

HIAL. So long as the child has me——! So long as *I* am above ground——!

[*A knock at the door.*

GINA. Hush, Ekdal; there's some one in the passage. [*Calls out.*] Come in!

[MRS. SÖRBY, *in walking dress, comes in.*

MRS. S. Good evening.

GINA [*going towards her*]. Is it really you, Bertha?

MRS. S. Yes, of course it is. But I'm disturbing you, I'm afraid?

HIAL. No, not at all; an emissary from that house——

MRS. S. [*to* GINA]. To tell the truth, I hoped your men-folk would be out at this time. I just ran up to have a little chat with you, and to say good-bye.

GINA. Good-bye? Are you going away, then?

MRS. S. Yes, to-morrow morning, —up to Höidal. Mr. Werle started this afternoon. [*Lightly to* GREGERS.] He asked me to say good-bye for him.

GINA. Only fancy——!

HIAL. I say: beware!

GREG. I must explain the situation. My father and Mrs. Sörby are going to be married.

HIAL. Going to be married!

GINA. Oh, Bertha! So it's come to that at last!

RELL. [*his voice quivering a little*]. This is surely not true?

MRS. S. Yes, my dear Relling, it's true enough.

RELL. You are going to marry again?

MRS. S. Yes, it looks like it. Werle has got a special license, and we are going to be married quietly, up at the works.

GREG. Then I must wish you all happiness, like a dutiful stepson.

MRS. S. Thank you very much—if you mean what you say. I certainly hope it will lead to happiness, both for Werle and for me.

RELL. You have every reason to hope that. Mr. Werle never gets drunk —so far as I know; and I don't suppose he's in the habit of thrashing his wives, like the late lamented horse-doctor.

MRS. S. Come now, let Sörby rest in peace. He had his good points, too.

RELL. Mr. Werle has better ones, I have no doubt.

MRS. S. He hasn't frittered away all that was good in him, at any rate. The man who does that must take the consequences.

RELL. I shall go out with Molvik this evening.

MRS. S. You mustn't do that, Relling. Don't do it—for my sake.

RELL. There's nothing else for it. [*To* HIALMAR.] If you're going with us, come along.

GINA. No, thank you. Ekdal doesn't go in for that sort of dissertation.

HIAL. [*half aloud, in vexation*]. Oh, do hold your tongue!

RELL. Good-bye, Mrs.— Werle.

[*Goes out through the passage door.*]

GREG. [*to* MRS. SÖRBY]. You seem to know Dr. Relling pretty intimately.

MRS. S. Yes, we have known each other for many years. At one time it seemed as if things might have gone further between us.

GREG. It was surely lucky for you that they did not.

MRS. S. You may well say that. But I have always been wary of acting on impulse. A woman can't afford absolutely to throw herself away.

GREG. Are you not in the least afraid that I may let my father know about this old friendship?

MRS. S. Why, of course, I have told him all about it myself.

GREG. Indeed?

MRS. S. Your father knows every single thing that can, with any truth, be said about me. I have told him all; it was the first thing I did when I saw what was in his mind.

GREG. Then you have been franker than most people, I think.

MRS. S. I have always been frank. We women find that the best policy.

HIAL. What do you say to that, Gina?

GINA. Oh, we're not all alike, us women aren't. Some are made one way, some another.

MRS. S. Well, for my part, Gina, I believe it's wisest to do as I've done. And Werle has no secrets either, on his side. That's really the great bond between us, you see. Now he can talk to me as openly as a child. He has never had the chance to do that before. Fancy a man like him, full of health and vigour, passing his whole youth and the best years of his life in listening to nothing but penitential sermons! And very often the sermons had for their text the most imaginary offences—at least so I understand.

GINA. That's true enough.

GREG. If you ladies are going to follow up this topic, I had better withdraw.

MRS. S. You can stay as far as that's concerned. I shan't say a word more. But I wanted you to know that I had done nothing secretly or in an underhand way. I may seem to have come in for a great piece of luck; and so I have, in a sense. But after all, I don't think I am getting any more than I am giving. I shall stand by him always, and I can tend and care for him as no one else can, now that he is getting helpless.

HIAL. Getting helpless?

GREG. [*to* MRS. SÖRBY]. Hush don't speak of that here.

MRS. S. There is no disguising it any longer, however much he would like to. He is going blind.

HIAL. [*starts*]. Going blind? That's strange. He, too, going blind!

GINA. Lots of people do.

MRS. S. And you can imagine what that means to a business man. Well, I shall try as well as I can to make my eyes take the place of his. But I mustn't stay any longer; I have heaps of things to do.—Oh, by-the-bye, Ekdal, I was to tell you that if there is anything Werle can do for you, you must just apply to Graberg.

GREG. That offer I am sure Hialmar Ekdal will decline with thanks.

MRS. S. Indeed? I don't think he used to be so——

GINA. No, Bertha, Ekdal doesn't need anything from Mr. Werle now.

HIAL. [*slowly, and with emphasis*]. Will you present my compliment to your future husband, and say that I intend very shortly to call upon Mr. Graberg——

GREG. What! You don't really mean that?

HIAL. To call upon Mr. Graberg, I say, and obtain an account of the sum I owe his principal. I will pay that debt of honour—ha ha ha! a debt of honour, let us call it! In any case, I will pay the whole with five per cent interest.

GINA. But, my dear Ekdal, God knows we haven't got the money to do it.

HIAL. Be good enough to tell your future husband that I am working assiduously at my invention. Please tell him that what sustains me in this laborious task is the wish to free myself from a torturing burden of debt. That is my reason for proceeding with the invention. The entire profits shall be devoted to releasing me from my pe-

cuniary obligations to your future husband.

MRS. S. Something has happened here.

HIAL. Yes, you are right.

MRS. S. Well, good-bye. I had something else to speak to you about, Gina; but it must keep till another time. Good-bye.

[HIALMAR *and* GREGERS *bow silently.* GINA *follows* MRS. SÖRBY *to the door.*]

HIAL. Not beyond the threshold, Gina!

[MRS. SÖRBY *goes;* GINA *shuts the door after her.*]

HIAL. There now, Gregers; I have got that burden of debt off my mind.

GREG. You soon will, at all events.

HIAL. I think my attitude may be called correct.

GREG. You are the man I have always taken you for.

HIAL. In certain cases, it is impossible to disregard the claim of the ideal. Yes, as the breadwinner of a family, I cannot but writhe and groan under it. I can tell you it is no joke for a man without capital to attempt the repayment of a long-standing obligation over which, so to speak, the dust of oblivion had gathered. But it cannot be helped: the Man in me demands his rights.

GREG. [*laying his hand on* HIALMAR'S *shoulder*]. My dear Hialmar—was it not a good thing I came?

HIAL. Yes.

GREG. Are you not glad to have had your true position made clear to me?

HIAL [*somewhat impatiently*]. Yes, of course I am. But there is one thing that is revolting to my sense of justice.

GREG. And what is that?

HIAL. It is that—but I don't know whether I ought to express myself so unreservedly about your father.

GREG. Say what you please, so far as I am concerned.

HIAL. Well, then, is it not exasperating to think that it is not I, but he, who will realise the true marriage?

GREG. How can you say such a thing?

HIAL. Because it is clearly the case. Isn't the marriage between your father and Mrs. Sörby founded upon complete confidence, upon entire and unreserved candour on both sides? They hide nothing from each other, they keep no secrets in the background; their relation is based, if I may put it so, on mutual confession and absolution.

GREG. Well, what then?

HIAL. Well, is not that the whole thing? Did you not yourself say that this was precisely the difficulty that had to be overcome in order to found a true marriage?

GREG. But this is a totally different matter, Hialmar. You surely don't compare either yourself or your wife with those two——? Oh, you understood me well enough.

HIAL. Say what you like, there is something in all this that hurts and offends my sense of justice. It really looks as if there were no just providence to rule the world.

GINA. Oh, no, Ekdal; for God's sake don't say such things.

GREG. H'm; don't let us get upon those questions.

HIAL. And yet, after all, I cannot but recognise the guiding finger of fate. He is going blind.

GINA. Oh, you can't be sure of that.

HIAL. There is no doubt about it. At all events there ought not to be;

for in that very fact lies the righteous retribution. He has hoodwinked a confiding fellow creature in days gone by——

GREG. I fear he has hoodwinked many.

HIAL. And now comes inexorable, mysterious Fate, and demands Werle's own eyes.

GINA. Oh, how dare you say such dreadful things! You make me quite scared.

HIAL. It is profitable, now and then, to plunge deep into the night side of existence.

[HEDVIG, *in her hat and cloak, comes in by the passage door. She is pleasurably excited and out of breath.*]

GINA. Are you back already?

HEDVIG. Yes, I didn't care to go any farther. It was a good thing, too; for I've just met some one at the door.

HIAL. It must have been that Mrs. Sörby.

HED. Yes.

HIAL. [*walks up and down*]. I hope you have seen her for the last time.

[*Silence.* HEDVIG, *discouraged looks first at one and then at the other, trying to divine their frame of mind.*]

HED. [*approaching, coaxingly*]. Father.

HIAL. Well—what is it, Hedvig?

HED. Mrs. Sörby had something with her for me.

HIAL. [*stops*]. For you?

HED. Yes. Something for to-morrow.

GINA. Bertha has always given you some little thing on your birthday.

HIAL. What is it?

HED. Oh, you mustn't see it now. Mother is to give it to me to-morrow morning before I'm up.

HIAL. What is all this hocus-pocus that I am to be in the dark about!

HED. [*quickly*]. Oh, no, you may see it if you like. It's a big letter.

[*Takes the letter out of her cloak pocket.*]

HIAL. A letter, too?

HED. Yes, it is only a letter. The rest will come afterwards, I suppose. But fancy—a letter! I've never had a letter before. And there's "Miss" written upon it. [*Reads.*] "Miss Hedvig Ekdal." Only fancy—that's me!

HIAL. Let me see that letter.

HED. [*hands it to him*]. There it is.

HIAL. That is Mr. Werle's hand.

GINA. Are you sure of that, Ekdal?

HIAL. Look for yourself.

GINA. Oh, what do I know about such-like things?

HIAL. Hedvig, may I open the letter—and read it.

HED. Yes, of course you may, if you want to.

GINA. No, not to-night, Ekdal; it's to be kept till tomorrow.

HED. [*softly*]. Oh, can't you let him read it! It's sure to be something good; and then father will be glad, and everything will be nice again.

HIAL. I may open it then?

HED. Yes, do, father. I'm so anxious to know what it is.

HIAL. Well and good. [*Opens the letter, takes out a paper, reads it through, and appears bewildered.*] What is this——!

GINA. What does it say?

HED. Oh, yes, father—tell us!

HIAL. Be quiet. [*Reads it through again; he has turned pale, but says with self-control:*] It is a deed of gift, Hedvig.

HED. Is it? What sort of gift am I to have?

HIAL. Read for yourself.

[HEDVIG *goes over and reads for a time by the lamp.*]

HIAL. [*half-aloud, clenching his hands*]. The eyes! The eyes—and then that letter!

HED. [*leaves off reading*]. Yes, but it seems to me that it's grandfather that's to have it.

HIAL. [*takes letter from her*]. Gina—can you understand this?

GINA. I know nothing whatever about it; tell me what's the matter.

HIAL. Mr. Werle writes to Hedvig that her old grandfather need not trouble himself any longer with the copying, but that he can henceforth draw on the office for a hundred crowns a month——

GREG. Aha!

HED. A hundred crowns, mother! I read that.

GINA. What a good thing for grandfather!

HIAL. ——a hundred crowns a month so long as he needs it—that means, of course, so long as he lives.

GINA. Well, so he's provided for, poor dear.

HIAL. But there is more to come. You didn't read that, Hedvig. Afterwards this gift is to pass on to you.

HED. To me! The whole of it?

HIAL. He says that the same amount is assured to you for the whole of your life. Do you hear that, Gina?

GINA. Yes, I hear.

HED. Fancy—all that money for me! [*Shakes him.*] Father, father, aren't you glad——?

HIAL. [*eluding her*]. Glad! [*Walks about.*] Oh, what vistas—what perspectives open up before me! It is Hedvig, Hedvig that he showers these benefactions upon!

GINA. Yes, because it's Hedvig's birthday——

HED. And you'll get it all the same, father! You know quite well I shall give all the money to you and mother.

HIAL. To mother, yes! There we have it.

GREG. Hialmar, this is a trap he is setting for you.

HIAL. Do you think it's another trap?

GREG. When he was here this morning he said: Hialmar Ekdal is not the man you imagine him to be.

HIAL. Not the man——!

GREG. That you shall see, he said.

HIAL. He meant you should see that I would let myself be bought off——!

HED. Oh, mother, what does all this mean?

GINA. Go and take off your things.

[HEDVIG *goes out by the kitchen door, half-crying.*]

GREG. Yes, Hialmar—now is the time to show who was right, he or I.

HIAL. [*slowly tears the paper across, lays both pieces on the table and says*]: Here is my answer.

GREG. Just what I expected.

HIAL. [*goes over to* GINA, *who stands by the stove, and says in a low voice*]: Now please make a clean breast of it. If the connection between you and him was quite over when you—came to care for me, as you call it—why did he place us in a position to marry?

GINA. I suppose he thought as he could come and go in our house.

HIAL. Only that? Was he not afraid of a possible contingency?

GINA. I don't know what you mean.

HIAL. I want to know whether—your child has the right to live under my roof.

GINA [*draws herself up; her eyes flash*]. You ask that!

HIAL. You shall answer me this one question: Does Hedvig belong to me—or——? Well!

GINA [*looking at him with cold defiance*]. I don't know.

HIAL. [*quivering a little*]. You don't know!

GINA. How should *I* know. A creature like me——

HIAL. [*quietly turning away from her*]. Then I have nothing more to do in this house.

GREG. Take care, Hialmar! Think what you are doing!

HIAL. [*puts on his overcoat*]. In this case there is nothing for a man like me to think twice about.

GREG. Yes indeed, there are endless things to be considered. You three must be together if you are to attain the true frame of mind for self-sacrifice and forgiveness.

HIAL. I don't want to attain it. Never, never! My hat! [*Takes his hat.*] My home has fallen into ruins about me. [*Bursts into tears.*] Gregers, I have no child!

HED. [*who has opened the kitchen door*]. What is that you're saying? [*Coming to him.*] Father, father!

GINA. There, you see!

HIAL. Don't come near me, Hedvig! Keep far away. I cannot bear to see you. Oh! those eyes——! Good-bye.

[*Makes for the door.*]

HED. [*clinging close to him and screaming loudly*]. No! no! Don't leave me!

GINA [*cries out*]. Look at the child, Ekdal! Look at the child!

HIAL. I will not! I cannot! I must get out—away from all this!

[*He tears himself away from* HEDVIG, *and goes out by the passage door.*]

HED. [*with despairing eyes*]. He is going away from us, mother! He is going away from us! He will never come back again!

GINA. Don't cry, Hedvig. Father's sure to come back again.

HED. [*throws herself sobbing on the sofa*]. No, no, he'll never come home to us any more.

GREG. Do you believe I meant all for the best, Mrs. Ekdal?

GINA. Yes, I daresay you did; but God forgive you, all the same.

HED. [*lying on the sofa*]. Oh, this will kill me? What have I done to him? Mother, you must fetch him home again!

GINA. Yes, yes, yes; only be quiet and I'll go out and look for him. [*Puts on her outdoor things.*] Perhaps he's gone into Relling's. But you mustn't lie there and cry. Promise me!

HED. [*weeping convulsively*]. Yes, I'll stop, I'll stop; if only father comes back!

GREG. [*to* GINA, *who is going*]. After all, had you not better leave him to fight out his bitter fight to the end?

GINA. Oh, he can do that afterwards. First of all, we must get the child quieted. [*Goes out by the passage door.*]

HED. [*sits up and dries her tears*]. Now you must tell me what all this means. Why doesn't father want me any more?

GREG. You musn't ask that till you are a big girl—quite grown-up.

HED. [*sobs*]. But I can't go on being as miserable as this till I'm grown-up.—I think I know what it is.—Perhaps I'm not really father's child.

GREG. [*uneasily*]. How could that be?

HED. Mother might have found me. And perhaps father has just got to know it; I've read of such things.

GREG. Well, but if it were so——

HED. I think he might be just as fond of me for all that. Yes, fonder almost. We got the wild duck in a present, you know, and I love it so dearly all the same.

GREG. [*turning the conversation*]. Ah, the wild duck, by-the-bye! Let us talk about the wild duck a little, Hedvig.

HED. The poor wild duck! He doesn't want to see it any more either. Only think, he wanted to wring its neck!

GREG. Oh, he won't do that.

HED. No; but he said he would like to. And I think it was horrid of father to say it: for I pray for the wild duck every night, and ask that it may be preserved from death and all that is evil.

GREG. [*looking at her*]. Do you say your prayers every night?

HED. Yes.

GREG. Who taught you to do that?

HED. I myself; one time when father was very ill, and had leeches on his neck, and said that death was staring him in the face.

GREG. Well?

HED. Then I prayed for him as I lay in bed; and since then I have always kept it up.

GREG. And now you pray for the wild duck too?

HED. I thought it best to bring in the wild duck; for she was so weakly at first.

GREG. Do you pray in the morning, too?

HED. No, of course not.

GREG. Why not in the morning as well?

HED. In the morning it's light, you know, and there's nothing in particular to be afraid of.

GREG. And your father was going to wring the neck of the wild duck that you love so dearly?

HED. No; he said he ought to wring its neck, but he would spare it for my sake; and that was kind of father.

GREG. [*coming a little nearer*]. But suppose you were to sacrifice the wild duck of your own free will for his sake.

HED. [*rising*]. The wild duck!

GREG. Suppose you were to make a free-will offering, for his sake, of the dearest treasure you have in the world?

HED. Do you think that would do any good?

GREG. Try it, Hedvig.

HED. [*softly, with flashing eyes*]. Yes, I will try it.

GREG. Have you really the courage for it, do you think?

HED. I'll ask grandfather to shoot the wild duck for me.

GREG. Yes, do. But not a word to your mother about it.

HED. Why not?

GREG. She doesn't understand us.

HED. The wild duck! I'll try it tomorrow morning.

[GINA *comes in by the passage door*].

HED. [*going towards her*]. Did you find him, mother?

GINA. No, but I heard as he had

called and taken Relling with him.

GREG. Are you sure of that?

GINA. Yes, the porter's wife said so. Molvik went with them, too, she said.

GREG. This evening, when his mind so sorely needs to wrestle in solitude ——!

GINA [*takes off her things*]. Yes, men are strange creatures, so they are. The Lord only knows where Relling has dragged him to! I ran over to Madam Eriksen's, but they weren't there.

HED. [*struggling to keep back her tears*]. Oh, if he should never come home any more!

GREG. He will come home again. I shall have news to give him to-morrow; and then you shall see how he comes home. You may rely upon that, Hedvig, and sleep in peace. Good-night.

[*He goes out by the passage door.*]

HED. [*throws herself sobbing on* GINA'S *neck*]. Mother, mother!

GINA [*pats her shoulder and sighs*]. Ah, yes; Relling was right, he was. That's what comes of it when crazy creatures go about presenting the claim of the—what-you-may-call-it.

ACT V

SCENE—HIALMAR EKDAL'S *studio. Cold, grey morning light. Wet snow lies upon the large panes of the sloping roof-window.*

GINA *comes from the kitchen with an apron and bib on, and carrying a dusting-brush and a duster; she goes towards the sitting-room door. At the same moment* HEDVIG *comes hurriedly in from the passage.*

GINA [*stops*]. Well?

HED. Oh, mother, I almost think he's down at Relling's——

GINA. There, you see!

HED. ——because the porter's wife says she could hear that Relling had two people with him when he came home last night.

GINA. That's just what I thought.

HED. But it's no use his being there, if he won't come up to us.

GINA. I'll go down and speak to him at all events.

OLD EKDAL, *in dressing-gown and slippers, and with a lighted pipe, appears at the door of his room.*

EKDAL. Hialmar——isn't Hialmar at home?

GINA. No, he's gone out.

EKDAL. So early? And in such a tearing snowstorm? Well, well; just as he pleases; I can take my morning walk alone.

[*He slides the garret door aside;* HEDVIG *helps him; he goes in; she closes it after him.*

HED. [*in an undertone*]. Only think, mother, when poor grandfather hears that father is going to leave us.

GINA. Oh, nonsense; grandfather mustn't hear anything about it. It was a heaven's mercy he wasn't at home yesterday in all that hurly-burly.

HED. Yes, but——

[GREGERS *comes in by the passage door.*

GREG. Well, have you any news of him?

GINA. They say he's down at Relling's.

GREG. At Relling's! Has he really been out with those creatures?

GINA. Yes, like enough.

GREG. When he ought to have been yearning for solitude, to collect and clear his thoughts——

GINA. Yes, you may well say so.

RELLING *enters from the passage.*

HED. [*going to him*]. Is father in your room?

GINA [*at the same time*]. Is he there?

RELL. Yes, to be sure he is.

HED. And you never let us know!

RELL. Yes; I'm a brute. But in the first place I had to look after the other brute; I mean our dæmonic friend, of course; and then I fell so dead asleep that——

GINA. What does Ekdal say to-day?

RELL. He says nothing whatever.

HED. Doesn't he speak?

RELL. Not a blessed word.

GREG. No no; I can understand that very well.

GINA. But what's he doing then?

RELL. He's lying on the sofa, snoring.

GINA. Oh, is he? Yes, Ekdal's a rare one to snore.

HED. Asleep? Can he sleep?

RELL. Well, it certainly looks like it.

GREG. No wonder, after the spiritual conflict that has rent him——

GINA. And then he's never been used to gadding about out of doors at night.

HED. Perhaps it's a good thing that he's getting sleep, mother.

GINA. Of course it is; and we must take care we don't wake him up too early. Thank you, Relling. I must get the house cleaned up a bit now, and then—— Come and help me, Hedvig.

[GINA *and* HEDVIG *go into the sitting-room.*

GREG. [*turning to* RELLING]. What is your explanation of the spiritual tumult that is now going on in Hialmar Ekdal?

RELL. Devil a bit of a spiritual tumult have I noticed in him.

GREG. What! Not at such a crisis, when his whole life has been placed on a new foundation——? How can you think that such an individuality as Hialmar's——?

RELL. Oh, individuality—he! If he ever had any tendency to the abnormal developments you call individuality, I can assure you it was rooted out of him while he was still in his teens.

GREG. That would be strange indeed,—considering the loving care with which he was brought up.

RELL. By those two high-flown, hysterical maiden aunts, you mean?

GREG. Let me tell you that they were women who never forgot the claim of the ideal—but of course you will only jeer at me again.

RELL. No, I'm in no humor for that. I know all about those ladies; for he has ladled out no end of rhetoric on the subject of his "two soul-mothers." But I don't think he has much to thank them for. Ekdal's misfortune is that in his own circle he has always been looked upon as a shining light——

GREG. Not without reason, surely. Look at the depth of his mind!

RELL. I have never discovered it. That his father believed in it I don't so much wonder; the old lieutenant has been an ass all his days.

GREG. He has had a child-like mind all his days; that is what you cannot understand.

RELL. Well, so be it. But then, when our dear, sweet Hialmar went to college, he at once passed for the great light of the future amongst his comrades too! He was handsome, the rascal—red and white—a shop-girl's

dream of manly beauty; and with his superficially emotional temperament, and his sympathetic voice, and his talent for declaiming other people's verses and other people's thoughts——

GREG. [*indignantly*]. Is it Hialmar Ekdal you are talking about in this strain?

RELL. Yes, with your permission; I am simply giving you an inside view of the idol you are grovelling before.

GREG. I should hardly have thought I was quite stone blind.

RELL. Yes you are—or not far from it. You are a sick man, too, you see.

GREG. You are right there.

RELL. Yes. Yours is a complicated case. First of all there is that plaguy integrity-fever; and then—what's worse—you are always in a delirium of hero-worship; you must always have something to adore, outside yourself.

GREG. Yes, I must certainly seek it outside myself.

RELL. But you make such shocking mistakes about every new phœnix you think you have discovered. Here again you have come to a cotter's cabin with your claim of the ideal; and the people of the house are insolvent.

GREG. If you don't think better than that of Hialmar Ekdal, what pleasure can you find in being everlastingly with him?

RELL. Well, you see, I'm supposed to be a sort of a doctor—save the mark! I can't but give a hand to the poor sick folk who live under the same roof with me.

GREG. Oh, indeed! Hialmar Ekdal is sick too, is he!

RELL. Most people are, worse luck.

GREG. And what remedy are you applying in Hialmar's case?

RELL. My usual one. I am cultivating the life-illusion in him.

GREG. Life—illusion? I didn't catch what you said.

RELL. Yes, I said illusion. For illusion, you know, is the stimulating principle.

GREG. May I ask with what illusion Hialmar is inoculated?

RELL. No, thank you; I don't betray professional secrets to quacksalvers. You would probably go and muddle his case still more than you have already. But my method is infallible. I have applied it to Molvik as well. I have made him "dæmonic." That's the blister I have to put on his neck.

GREG. Is he not really dæmonic then?

RELL. What the devil do you mean by dæmonic! It's only a piece of gibberish I've invented to keep up a spark of life in him. But for that, the poor harmless creature would have succumbed to self-contempt and despair many a long year ago. And then the old lieutenant! But he has hit upon his own cure, you see.

GREG. Lieutenant Ekdal? What of him?

RELL. Just think of the old bear-hunter shutting himself up in that dark garret to shoot rabbits! I tell you there is not a happier sportsman in the world than that old man pottering about in there among all that rubbish. The four or five withered Christmas-trees he has saved up are the same to him as the whole great fresh Höidal forest; the cock and the hens are big game-birds in the fir-tops; and the rabbits that flop about the garret floor are the bears he has to battle with—the mighty hunter of the mountains!

GREG. Poor unfortunate old man! Yes; he has indeed had to narrow the ideals of his youth.

RELL. While I think of it, Mr. Werle, junior—don't use that foreign word: ideals. We have the excellent native word: lies.

GREG. Do you think the two things are related?

RELL. Yes, just about as closely as typhus and putrid fever.

GREG. Dr. Relling, I shall not give up the struggle until I have rescued Hialmar from your clutches!

RELL. So much the worse for him. Rob the average man of his life-illusion, and you rob him of his happiness at the same stroke. [*To* HEDVIG, *who comes in from the sitting room.*] Well, little wild-duck-mother. I'm just going down to see whether papa is still lying meditating upon that wonderful invention of his.

[*Goes out by passage door.*

GREG. [*approaches* HEDVIG]. I can see by your fact that you have not yet done it.

HED. What? Oh, that about the wild duck! No.

GREG. I suppose your courage failed when the time came.

HED. No, that wasn't it. But when I awoke this morning and remembered what he had been talking about, it seemed so strange.

GREG. Strange?

HED. Yes, I don't know—— Yesterday evening, at the moment, I thought there was something so delightful about it; but since I have slept and thought of it again, it somehow doesn't seem worth while.

GREG. Ah, I thought you could not have grown up quite unharmed in this house.

HED. I don't care about that, if only father would come up——

GREG. Oh, if only your eyes had been opened to that which gives life its value—if you possessed the true, joyous, fearless spirit of sacrifice, you would soon see how he would come up to you.—But I believe in you still, Hedvig.

[*He goes out by the passage door.* HEDVIG *wanders about the room for a time; she is on the point of going into the kitchen when a knock is heard at the garret door.* HEDVIG *goes over and opens it a little; old* EKDAL *comes out; she pushes the door to again.*

EKD. H'm, it's not much fun to take one's morning walk alone.

HED. Wouldn't you like to go shooting, grandfather?

EKD. It's not the weather for it today. It's so dark there, you can scarcely see where you're going.

HED. Do you never want to shoot anything besides the rabbits?

EKD. Do you think the rabbits aren't good enough?

HED. Yes, but what about the wild duck?

EKD. Ho-ho! are you afraid I shall shoot your wild duck? Never in the world. Never.

HED. No, I suppose you couldn't; say it's very difficult to shoot wild ducks.

EKD. Couldn't! Should rather think I could.

HED. How would you set about it, grandfather?—I don't mean with my wild duck, but with others?

EKD. I should take care to shoot them in the breast, you know; that's the surest place. And then you must shoot

against the feathers, you see—not the way of the feathers.

HED. Do they die then, grandfather?

EKD. Yes, they die right enough—when you shoot properly. Well, I must go and brush up a bit. H'm—understand—h'm. [*Goes into his room.*]

[HEDVIG *waits a little, glances towards the sitting-room door, goes over to the bookcase, stands on tip-toe, takes the double-barrelled pistol down from the shelf, and looks at it.* GINA, *with brush and duster, comes from the sitting-room.* HEDVIG *hastily lays down the pistol, unobserved.*

GINA. Don't stand raking amongst father's things, Hedvig.

[HEDVIG *goes away from the bookcase*]. I was only going to tidy up a little.

GINA. You'd better go into the kitchen, and see if the coffee's keeping hot; I'll take his breakfast on a tray, when I go down to him.

[HEDVIG *goes out.* GINA *begins to sweep and clean up the studio. Presently the passage door is opened with hesitation, and* HIALMAR EKDAL *looks in. He has on his overcoat, but not his hat; he is unwashed, and his hair is dishevelled and unkempt. His eyes are dull and heavy.*

GINA [*standing with the brush in her hand, and looking at him*]. Oh, there now, Ekdal—so you've come after all?

HIAL. [*comes in and answers in a toneless voice*]. I come—only to depart immediately.

GINA. Yes, yes, I suppose so. But, Lord help us! what a sight you are!

HIAL. A sight?

GINA. And your nice winter coat too! Well, that's done for.

HED. [*at the kitchen door*]. Mother, hadn't I better——? [*Sees* HIALMAR, *gives a loud screm of joy, and runs to him*]. Oh, father, father!

HIAL. [*turns away and makes a gesture of repulsion*]. Away, away, away! [*To* GINA.] Keep her away from me, I say!

GINA [*in a low tone*]. Go into the sitting-room, Hedvig.

[HEDVIG *does so without a word.*]

HIAL. [*fussily pulls out the table-drawer*]. I must have my books with me. Where are my books?

GINA. Which books?

HIAL. My scientific books, of course; the technical magazines I require for my invention.

GINA [*searches in the bookcase*]. Is it these here paper-covered ones?

HIAL. Yes, of course.

GIANA [*lays a heap of magazines on the table*]. Shan't I get Hedvig to cut them for you?

HIAL. I don't require to have them cut for me. [*Short silence.*]

GINA. Then you're still set on leaving us, Ekdal?

HIAL. [*rummaging amongst the books*]. Yes, that is a matter of course, I should think.

GINA. Well, well.

HIAL. [*vehemently*]. How can I live here, to be stabbed to the heart every hour of the day?

GINA. God forgive you for thinking such vile things of me.

HIAL. Prove——!

GINA. I think it's you as has got to prove.

HIAL. After a past like yours? There are certain claims—I may almost call them claims of the ideal——

GINA. But what about grandfather? What's to become of him, poor dear?

HIAL. I know my duty; my helpless father will come with me. I am going out into the town to make arrangements—— H'm—— [*hesitatingly*]—has any one found my hat on the stairs?

GINA. No. Have you lost your hat?

HIAL. Of course I had it on when I came in last night; there's no doubt about that; but I couldn't find it this morning.

GINA. Lord help us! where have you been to with those two ne'er-do-wells?

HIAL. Oh, don't bother me about trifles. Do you suppose I am in the mood to remember details?

GINA. If only you haven't caught cold, Ekdal——

[*Goes out into the kitchen.*]

HIAL. [*talks to himself in a low tone of irritation, whilst he empties the table-drawer*]. You're a scoundrel, Relling!—You're a low fellow!—Ah, you shameless tempter!—I wish I could get some one to stick a knife into you!

[*He lays some old letters on one side, finds the torn document of yesterday, takes it up and looks at the pieces; puts it down hurriedly as* GINA *enters.*]

GINA [*sets a tray with coffee, etc., on the table*]. Here's a drop of something hot, if you'd fancy it. And there's some bread and butter and a snack of salt meat.

HIAL. [*glancing at the tray*]. Salt meat? Never under this roof! It's true I have not had a mouthful of solid food for nearly twenty-four hours; but no matter.—My memoranda! The commencement of my autobiography! What has become of my diary, and all my important papers? [*Opens the sitting-room door but draws back.*] She is there too!

GINA. Good Lord! the child must be somewhere!

HIAL. Come out.

[*He makes room,* HEDVIG *comes, scared, into the studio.*]

HIAL. [*with his hand on the door-handle, says to* GINA]: In these, the last moments I spend in my former home, I wish to be spared from interlopers—— [*Goes into the room.*]

HED. [*with a bound towards her mother, asks softly, trembling*]. Does that mean me?

GINA. Stay out in the kitchen, Hedvig; or, no—you'd best go into your own room. [*Speaks to* HIALMAR *as she goes in to him.*] Wait a bit, Ekdal; don't rummage so in the drawers; I know where everything is.

HED. [*stands a moment immovable, in terror and perplexity, biting her lips to keep back the tears; then she clenches her hands convulsively, and says softly*]: The wild duck.

[*She steals over and takes the pistol from the shelf, opens the garret door a little way, creeps in, and draws the door to after her.*

[HIALMAR *and* GINA *can be heard disputing in the sitting-room.*

HIAL. [*comes in with some manuscript books and old loose papers, which he lays upon the table*]. That portmanteau is of no use! There are a thousand and one things I must drag with me.

GINA [*following with the portmanteau*]. Why not leave all the rest for the present, and only take a shirt and a pair of woolen drawers with you?

HIAL. Whew!—all these exhausting preparations——!

[*Pulls off his overcoat and throws it upon the sofa.*]

GINA. And there's the coffee getting cold.

HIAL. H'm.

[*Drinks a mouthful without thinking of it, and then another.*]

GINA [*dusting the backs of the chairs*]. A nice job you'll have to find such another big garret for the rabbits.

HIAL. What! Am I to drag all those rabbits with me too?

GINA. You don't suppose grandfather can get on without his rabbits.

HIAL. He must just get used to doing without them. Have not *I* to sacrifice very much greater things than rabbits!

GINA [*dusting the bookcase*]. Shall I put the flute in the portmanteau for you?

HIAL. No. No flute for me. But give me the pistol!

GINA. Do you want to take the pigstol with you?

HIAL. Yes. My loaded pistol.

GINA [*searching for it*]. It's gone. He must have taken it in with him.

HIAL. Is he in the garret?

GINA. Yes, of course he's in the garret.

HIAL. H'm—poor lonely old man.

[*He takes a piece of bread and butter, eats it, and finishes his cup of coffee.*

GINA. If we hadn't have let that room, you could have moved in there.

HIAL. And continued to live under the same roof with——! Never,—never!

GINA. But couldn't you put up with the sitting-room for a day or two? You could have it all to yourself.

HIAL. Never within these walls!

GINA. Well then, down with Relling and Molvik.

HIAL. Don't mention those wretches' names to me! The very thought of them almost takes away my appetite.—Oh, no, I must go out into the storm and the snow-drift,—go from house to house and seek shelter for my father and myself.

GINA. But you've got no hat, Ekdal! You've been and lost your hat, you know.

HIAL. Oh, those two brutes, those slaves of all the vices! A hat must be procured. [*Takes another piece of bread and butter.*] Some arrangements must be made. For I have no mind to throw away my life, either.

[*Looks for something on the tray.*]

GINA. What are you looking for?

HIAL. Butter.

GINA. I'll get some at once.

[*Goes out into the kitchen.*]

HIAL. [*calls after her.*] Oh, it doesn't matter; dry bread is good enough for me.

GINA [*brings a dish of butter*]. Look here; this is fresh churned.

[*She pours out another cup of coffee for him; he seats himself on the sofa, spreads more butter on the already buttered bread, and eats and drinks awhile in silence.*

HIAL. Could I, without being subject to intrusion—intrusion of any sort—could I live in the sitting-room there for a day or two?

GINA. Yes, to be sure you could, if you only would.

HIAL. For I see no possibility of getting all father's things out in such a hurry.

GINA. And, besides, you've surely got to tell him first as you don't mean

to live with us others no more.

HIAL. [*pushes away his coffee cup*]. Yes, there is that too; I shall have to lay bare the whole tangled story to him —— I must turn matter over; I must have breathing-time; I cannot take all these burdens on my shoulders in a single day.

GINA. No, especially in such horrible weather as it is outside.

HIAL. [*touching* WERLE'S *letter*]. I see that paper is still lying about here.

GINA. Yes, *I* haven't touched it.

HIAL. So far as I am concerned it is mere waste paper——

GINA. Well, *I* have certainly no notion of making any use of it.

HIAL. ——but we had better not let it get lost all the same;—in all the upset when I move, it might easily——

GINA. I'll take good care of it, Ekdal.

HIAL. The donation is in the first instance made to father, and it rests with him to accept or decline it.

GINA [*sighs*]. Yes, poor old father ——

HIAL. To make quite safe—— Where shall I find some gum?

GINA [*goes to the bookcase*]. Here's the gum-pot.

HIAL. And a brush?

HIAL. The brush is here too.

[*Brings him the things.*]

HIAL. [*takes a pair of scissors*]. Just a strip of paper at the back—— [*Clips and gums.*] Far be it from me to lay hands upon what is not my own—and least of all upon what belongs to a destitute old man—and to —the other as well.—There now. Let it lie there for a time; and when it is dry, take it away. I wish never to see that document again. Never!

GREGERS WERLE *enters from the passage.*

GREG. [*somewhat surprised*]. What, —are you sitting here, Hialmar?

HIAL. [*rises hurriedly*]. I had sunk down from fatigue.

GREG. You have been having breakfast, I see.

HIAL. The body sometimes makes its claims felt too.

GREG. What have you decided to do?

HIAL. For a man like me, there is only one course possible. I am just putting my most important things together. But it takes time, you know.

GINA [*with a touch of impatience*]. Am I to get the room ready for you, or am I to pick your portmanteau?

HIAL. [*after a glance of annoyance at* GREGERS]. Pack—and get the room ready!

GINA [*takes the portmanteau*]. Very well; then I'll put in the shirt and the other things.

[*Goes into the sitting-room and draws the door to after her.*]

GREG. [*after a short silence*]. I never dreamed that this would be the end of it. Do you really feel it a necessity to leave house and home?

HIAL. [*wanders about restlessly*]. What would you have me do?—I am not fitted to bear unhappiness, Gregers. I must feel secure and at peace in my surroundings.

GREG. But can you not feel that here? Just try it. I should have thought you had firm ground to build upon now—if only you start afresh. And, remember, you have your invention to live for.

HIAL. Oh, don't talk about my invention. It's perhaps still in the dim distance.

GREG. Indeed!

HIAL. Why, great heavens, what would you have one invent? Other people have invented almost everything already. It becomes more and more difficult every day——

GREG. And you have devoted so much labour to it.

HAIL. It was that blackguard Relling that urged me to it.

GREG. Relling?

HIAL. Yes, it was he that first made me realise my aptitude for making some notable discovery in photography.

GREG. Aha—it was Relling!

HIAL. Oh, I have been so truly happy over it! Not so much for the sake of the invention itself, as because Hedvig believed in it—believed in it with a child's whole eagerness of faith. —At least, I have been fool enough to do and imagine that she believed in it.

GREG. Can you really think Hedvig has been false towards you?

HIAL. I can think anything now. It is Hedvig that stands in my way. She will blot out the sunlight from my whole life.

GREG. Hedvig! Is it Hedvig you are talking of? How should she blot out your sunlight?

HIAL. [*Without answering*]. How unutterably I have loved that child! How unutterably happy I have felt every time I came home to my humble room, and she flew to meet me, with her sweet little blinking eyes. Oh, confiding fool that I have been! I loved her unutterably;—and I yielded myself to the dream, the delusion, that she loved me unutterably in return.

GREG. Do you call that a delusion?

HIAL. How should I know? I can get nothing out of Gina; and besides, she is totally blind to the ideal side of these complications. But to you I feel impelled to open my mind, Gregers. I cannot shake off this frightful doubt—perhaps Hedvig has never really and honestly loved me.

GREG. What would you say if she were to give you a proof of her love? [*Listens.*] What's that? I thought I heard the wild duck——?

HIAL. It's the wild duck quacking. Father's in the garret.

GREG. Is he? [*His face lights up with joy.*] I say you may yet have proof that your poor misunderstood Hedvig loves you!

HIAL. Oh, what proof can she give me? I dare not believe in any assurance from that quarter.

GREG. Hedvig does not know what deceit means.

HIAL. Oh, Gregers, that is just what I cannot be sure of. Who knows what Gina and that Mrs. Sörby may many a time have sat here whispering and tattling about? And Hedvig usually has her ears open, I can tell you. Perhaps the deed of gift was not such a surprise to her, after all. In fact, I'm not sure but that I noticed something of the sort.

GREG. What spirit is this that has taken possession of you?

HIAL. I have had my eyes opened. Just you notice;—you'll see, the deed of gift is only a beginning. Mrs. Sörby has always been a good deal taken up with Hedvig; and now she has the power to do whatever she likes for the child. They can take her from me whenever they please.

GREG. Hedvig will never, never leave you.

HIAL. Don't be so sure of that. If only they beckon to her and throw out a golden bait——! And oh! I have loved her so unspeakably! I would have counted it my highest happiness to take her tenderly by the hand and lead her, as one leads a timid child through a great dark empty room!—I am cruelly certain now that the poor photographer in his humble attic has never really and truly been anything to her. She has only cunningly contrived to keep on a good footing with him until the time came.

GREG. You don't believe that yourself, Hialmar.

HIAL. That is just the terrible part of it—I don't know what to believe,—I never can know it. But can you really doubt that it must be as I say? Ho-ho, you have far too much faith in the claim of the ideal, my good Greggers! If those others came, with the glamour of wealth about them, and called to the child:—"Leave him: come to us: here life awaits you——!"

GREG. [*quickly*]. Well, what then?

HIAL. If I then asked her: Hedvig, are you willing to renounce that life for me? [*Laughs scornfully.*] No thank you! You would soon hear what answer I should get.

[*A pistol shot is heard from within the garret.*

GREG. [*loudly and joyfully*]. Hialmar!

HIAL. There now; he must needs go shooting too.

GINA [*comes in*]. Oh, Ekdal, I can hear grandfather blazing away in the garret by himself.

HIAL. I'll look in——

GREG. [*eagerly, with emotion*]. Wait a moment! Do you know what that was?

HIAL. Yes, of course I know.

GREG. No, you don't know. But *I* do. That was the proof!

HIAL. What proof?

GREG. It was a child's free-will offering. She has got your father to shoot the wild duck.

HIAL. To shoot the wild duck!

GINA. Oh, think of that——!

HIAL. What was that for?

GREG. She wanted to sacrifice to you her most cherished possession; for then she thought you would surely come to love her again.

HIAL. [*tenderly, with emotion*]. Oh, poor child!

GINA. What things she does think of!

GREG. She only wanted your love again, Hialmar. She could not live without it.

GINA [*struggling with her tears*]. There, you can see for yourself, Ekdal.

HIAL. Gina, where is she?

GINA [*sniffs*]. Poor dear, she's sitting out in the kitchen, I dare say.

HIAL. [*goes over, tears open the kitchen door, and says*]: Hedvig, come, come in to me! [*Looks around.*] No, she's not here.

GINA. Then she must be in her own little room.

HIAL. [*without*]. No, she's not here either. [*Comes in.*] She must have gone out.

GINA. Yes, you wouldn't have her anywheres in the house.

HIAL. Oh, if she would only come home quickly, so that I can tell her—Everything will come right now,

Gregers; now I believe we can begin life afresh.

GREG. [*quietly*]. I knew it; I knew the child would make amends.

OLD EKDAL *appears at the door of his room; he is in full uniform, and is busy buckling on his sword.*

HIAL. [*astonished*]. Father! Are you there?

GINA. Have you been firing in your room?

EKD. [*resentfully, approaching*]. So you go shooting alone, do you, Hialmar?

HIAL. [*excited and confused*]. Then it wasn't you that fired that shot in the garret?

EKD. Me that fired? H'm.

GREG. [*calls out to* HIALMAR]. She has shot the wild duck herself!

HIAL. What can it mean? [*Hastens to the garret door, tears it aside, looks in and calls loudly*]. Hedvig!

GINA [*runs to the door*]. Good God, what's that!

HIAL. [*goes in*]. She's lying on the floor!

GREG. Hedvig! lying on the floor!

[*Goes in to* HIALMAR.]

GINA [*at the same time*]. Hedvig! *Inside the garret.*] No, no, no!

EKD. Ho-ho! does she go shooting, too, now?

[HIALMAR, GINA *and* GREGERS *carry* HEDVIG *into the studio; in her dangling right hand she holds the pistol fast clasped in her fingers.*

HIAL. [*distracted*]. The pistol has gone off. She has wounded herself. Call for help! Help!

GINA [*runs into the passage and calls down*]. Relling! Relling! Doctor Relling; come up as quick as you can!

[HIALMAR *and* GREGERS *lay* HEDVIG *down on the sofa.*

EKD. [*quietly*]. The woods avenge themselves.

HIAL. [*on his knees beside* HEDVIG]. She'll soon come to now. She's coming to——; yes, yes, yes.

GINA [*who has come in again*]. Where has she hurt herself? I can't see anything——

[RELLING *comes hurriedly, and immediately after him* MOLVIK; *the latter without his waistcoat and necktie, and with his coat open.*

RELL. What's the matter here?

GINA. They say Hedvig shot herself.

HIAL. Come and help us?

RELL. Shot herself!

[*He pushes the table aside and begins to examine her.*

HIAL. [*kneeling and looking anxiously up at him*]. It can't be dangerous? Speak, Relling! She is scarcely bleeding at all. It can't be dangerous?

RELL. How did it happen?

HIAL. Oh, we don't know——

GINA. She wanted to shoot the wild duck.

RELL. The wild duck?

HIAL. The pistol must have gone off.

RELL. H'm. Indeed.

EKD. The woods avenge themselves. But I'm not afraid, all the same.

[*Goes into the garret and closes the door after him.*]

HIAL. Well, Relling,—why don't you say something?

RELL. The ball has entered the breast.

HIAL. Yes, but she's coming to!

RELL. Surely you can see that Hedvig is dead.

GINA [*bursts into tears*]. Oh, my child, my child——

GREG. [*huskily*]. In the depths of the sea—

HIAL. [*jumps up*]. No, no, she must live! Oh, for God's sake, Relling—only a moment—only just till I can tell her how unspeakably I loved her all the time.

RELL. The bullet has gone through her heart. Internal hemorrhage. Death must have been instantaneous.

HIAL. And I! I hunted her from me like an animal! And she crept terrified into the garret and died for love of me! [*Sobbing*]. I can never atone to her! I can never tell her——! [*Clenches his hands and cries, upwards.*] Oh, thou above——! If thou be indeed! Why hast thou done this thing to me?

GINA. Hush, hush, you mustn't go on that awful way. We had no right to keep her, I suppose.

MOL. The child is not dead, but sleepeth.

RELL. Bosh.

HIAL. [*becomes calm, goes over to the sofa, folds his arms, and looks at* HEDVIG]. There she lies so stiff and still.

RELL. [*tries to loosen the pistol*]. She's holding it so tight, so tight.

GINA. No, no, Relling, don't break her fingers; let the pistol be.

HIAL. She shall take it with her.

GINA. Yes, let her. But the child mustn't lie here for a show. She shall go to her own room, so she shall. Help me, Ekdal.

[HIALMAR *and* GINA *take* HEDVIG *between them*].

HIAL. [*as they are carrying her*]. Oh, Gina, Gina, can you survive this!

GINA. We must help each other to bear it. For now at least she belongs to both of us.

MOL. [*stretches out his arms and mumbles*]. Blessed be the Lord; to earth thou shalt return; to earth thou shalt return——

RELL. [*whispers*]. Hold your tongue, you fool; you're drunk.

[HIALMAR *and* GINA *carry the body out through the kitchen door.* RELLING *shuts it after them.* MOLVIK *slinks out into the passage.*]

RELL. [*goes over to* GREGERS *and says*]: No one shall ever convince me that the pistol went off by accident.

GREG. [*who has stood terrified, with convulsive twitchings*]. Who can say how the dreadful thing happened?

RELL. The powder has burnt the body of her dress. She must have pressed the pistol right against her breast and fired.

GREG. Hedvig has not died in vain. Did you not see how sorrow set free what is noble in him?

RELL. Most people are ennobled by the actual presence of death. But how long do you suppose this nobility will last in him?

GREG. Why should it not endure and increase throughout his life?

RELL. Before a year is over, little Hedvig will be nothing to him but a pretty theme for declamation.

GREG. How dare you say that of Hialmar Ekdal?

RELL. We will talk of this again, when the grass has first withered on her grave. Then you'll hear him spouting about "the child too early torn from her father's heart"; then you'll see him steep himself in a syrup of sentiment and self-admiration and

self-pity. Just you wait!

GREG. If you are right and I am wrong, then life is not worth living.

RELL. Oh, life would be quite tolerable, after all, if only we could be rid of the comfounded duns that keep on pestering us, in our poverty, with the claim of the ideal.

GREG. [*looking straight before him*]. In that case, I am glad that my destiny is what it is.

RELL. May I inquire,—what is your destiny?

GREG. [*going*]. To be the thirteenth at table.

RELL. The devil it is.

Volume VII

The Master Builder

THE PERSONS OF THE PLAY.

HALVARD SOLNESS, *Master Builder.*
ALINE SOLNESS, *his wife.*
DOCTOR HERDAL, *physician.*
KNUT BROVIK, *formerly an architect now in Solness's employment.*
RAGNAR BROVIK, *his son, draughtsman.*
KAIA FOSLI, *his niece, book-keeper.*
MISS HILDA WANGEL.
Some Ladies.
A Crowd in the street.

The action takes place in and about Solness's house.

ACT I

SCENE—*A plainly furnished workroom in the house of Halvard Solness. Folding doors on the left lead out to the hall. On the right is the door leading to the inner rooms of the house. At the back is an open door into the draughtsmen's office. In front, on the left, a desk with books, papers and writing materials. Further back than the folding-door, a stove. In the right-hand corner, a sofa, a table, and one or two chairs. On the table a water-bottle and glass. A smaller table, with a rocking-chair and arm-chair, in front on the right. Lighted lamps, with shades, on the table in the draughtsmen's office, on the table in the corner, and on the desk. In the draughtsmen's office sit* KNUT BROVIK *and his son* RAGNAR, *occupied with plans and calculations. At the desk in the outer office stand* KAIA FOSLI, *writing in the ledger.* KNUT BROVIK *is a spare old man with white hair and beard. He wears a rather threadbare but well-brushed black coat, spectacles, and a somewhat discoloured white neckcloth.* RAGNAR BROVIK *is a well-dressed, light-haired man in his thirties, with a slight stoop.* KAIA FOSLI *is a slightly built girl, a little over twenty, carefully dressed, and delicate-looking. She has a green shade over her eyes.—All three go on working for some time in silence.*

BRO. [*rises suddenly, as if in distress, from the table; breathes heavily and laboriously as he comes forward into the doorway*]. No, I can't bear it much longer!

KAIA [*going up to him*]. You are feeling very ill this evening, are you not, uncle?

BRO. Oh, I seem to get worse every day.

RAG. [*has risen and advances*]. You ought to go home, father. Try to get a little sleep——

BRO. [*impatiently*]. Go to bed, I suppose? Would you have me stifled outright?

KAIA. Then take a little walk.

RAG. Yes, do, I will come with you.

BRO. [*with warmth*]. I will not go till he comes! I am determined to have it out this evening with—[*in a tone of suppressed bitterness*]—with him—with the chief.

KAIA [anxiously]. Oh, no, uncle—do wait a while before doing that.

RAG. Yes, better wait, father!

BRO. [*draws his breath laboriously*]. Ha—ha—! *I* haven't much time for waiting.

KAIA [*listening*]. Hush! I hear him on the stairs. [*All three go back to their work. A short silence.*]

HALVARD SOLNESS *comes in through the hall door. He is a man no longer young, but healthy and vigorous, with close-cut curly hair, dark moustache and dark thick eyebrows. He wears a greyish-green buttoned jacket with an up-standing collar and broad lapels. On his head he wears a soft grey felt hat, and he has one or two light portfolios under his arm.*

SOL. [*near the door, points towards the draughtsmen's office, and asks in a whisper*]. Are they gone?

KAIA [*softly, shaking her head*]. No. [*She takes the shade off her eyes. Solness crosses the room, throws his hat on a chair, places the portfolios on the table by the sofa, and approaches the desk again.* KAIA *goes on writing without intermission, but seems nervous and uneasy.*]

SOL. [*aloud*]. What is that you are entering, Miss Fosli?

KAIA [*starts*]. Oh, it is only something that——

SOL. Let me look at it, Miss Fosli. [*Bends over her, pretends to be looking into the ledger, and whispers.*] Kaia!

KAIA [*softly, still writing*]. Well?

SOL. Why do you always take that shade off when I come?

KAIA [*as before*]. I look so ugly with it on.

SOL. [*smiling*]. Then you don't like to look ugly, Kaia?

KAIA [*half glancing up at him*]. Not for all the world. Not in your eyes.

SOL. [*stroking her hair gently*]. Poor, poor little Kaia——

KAIA [*bending her head*]. Hush—they can hear you.

[SOLNESS *strolls across the room to the right, turns and pauses at the door of the draughtsmen's office.*]

SOL. Has anyone been here for me?

RAG. [*rising*]. Yes, the young couple who want a villa built, out at Lövstrand.

SOL. [*growling*]. Oh, those two! They must wait. I am not quite clear about the plans yet.

RAG. [*advancing, with some hesitation*]. They were very anxious to have the drawings at once.

SOL. [*as before*]. Yes, of course—so they all are.

BRO. [*looks up*]. They say they are longing so to get into a house of their own.

SOL. Yes, yes—we know all that! And so they are content to take whatever is offered them. They get a—a roof over their heads—an address—but nothing to call a home. No thank you! In that case, let them apply to somebody else. Tell them that, the next time they call.

BRO. [*pushes his glasses up on to his forehead and looks in astonishment at him*]. To somebody else? Are you prepared to give up the commission?

SOL. [*impatiently*]. Yes, yes, yes, devil take it! If that is to be the way of it——. Rather that, than build away at random. [*Vehemently.*] Besides,

I know very little about these people as yet.

BRO. The people are safe enough. Ragnar knows them. He is a friend of the family. Perfectly safe people.

SOL. Oh, safe—safe enough! That is not at all what I mean. Good Lord—don't you understand me either? [*Angrily.*] I won't have anything to do with these strangers. They may apply to whom they please, so far as I am concerned.

BRO. [*rising*]. Do you really mean that?

SOL. [*sulkily*]. Yes, I do—For once in a way. [*He comes forward.*]

[BROVIK *exchanges a glance with* RAGNAR, *who makes a warning gesture. Then* BROVIK *comes into the front room.*

BRO. May I have a few words with you?

SOL. Certainly.

BRO. [*to* KAIA]. Just go in there for a moment, Kaia.

KAIA [*uneasily*]. Oh, but uncle——

BRO. Do as I say, child. And shut the door after you.

[KAIA *goes reluctantly into the draughtsmen's office, glances anxiously and imploringly at* SOLNESS, *and shuts the door.*]

BRO. [*lowering his voice a little*]. I don't want the poor children to know how ill I am.

SOL. Yes, you have been looking very poorly of late.

BRO. It will soon be all over with me. My strength is ebbing—from day to day.

SOL. Won't you sit down?

BRO. Thanks—may I?

SOL. [*placing the arm-chair more conveniently*]. Here—take this chair. —And now?

BRO. [*has seated himself with difficulty*]. Well, you see, it's about Ragnar. That is what weighs most upon me. What is to become of him?

SOL. Of course your son will stay with me as long as ever he likes.

BRO. But that is just what he does not like. He feels that he cannot stay here any longer.

SOL. Why, I should say he was very well off here. But if he wants more money, I should not mind——

BRO. No, no! It is not that. [*Impatiently.*] But sooner or later he, too, must have a chance of doing something on his own account.

SOL. [*without looking at him*]. Do you think that Ragnar has quite talent enough to stand alone?

BRO. No, that is just the heart-breaking part of it—I have begun to have my doubts about the boy. For you have never said so much as—as one encouraging word about him. And yet I cannot but think there must be something in him—he can't be without talent.

SOL. Well, but he has learnt nothing—nothing thoroughly, I mean. Except, of course, to draw.

BRO. [*looks at him with covert hatred, and says hoarsely*]. You had learned little enough of the business when you were in my employment. But that did not prevent you from setting to work—[*breathing with difficulty*]—and pushing your way up, and taking the wind out of my sails—mine, and so many other people's.

SOL. Yes, you see—circumstances favoured me.

BRO. You are right there. Every-

thing favoured you. But then how can you have the heart to let me go to my grave—without having seen what Ragnar is fit for? And of course I am anxious to see them married, too—before I go.

SOL. [*sharply*]. Is it she who wishes it?

BRO. Not Kaia so much as Ragnar—he talks about it every day. [*Appealingly.*] You must—you must help him to get some independent work now! I must see something that the lad has done. Do you hear?

SOL. [*peevishly*]. Hang it, man, you can't expect me to drag commissions down from the moon for him!

BRO. He has the chance of a capital commission at this very moment. A big bit of work.

SOL. [*uneasily, startled*]. Has he?

BRO. If you would give your consent.

SOL. What sort of work do you mean?

BRO. [*with some hesitation*]. He can have the building of that villa out at Lövstrand.

SOL. That! Why, I am going to build that myself.

BRO. Oh, you don't much care about doing it.

SOL. [*flaring up*]. Don't care! I? Who dares to say that?

BRO. You said so yourself just now.

SOL. Oh, never mind what I say.—Would they give Ragnar the building of that villa?

BRO. Yes. You see, he knows the family. And then—just for the fun of the thing—he has made drawings and estimates and so forth——

SOL. Are they pleased with the drawings? The people who will have to live in the house?

BRO. Yes. If you would only look through them and approve of them.

SOL. Then they would let Ragnar build their home for them?

BRO. They were immensely pleased with his idea. They thought it exceedingly original, they said.

SOL. Oho! Original! Not the old-fashioned stuff that *I* am in the habit of turning out!

BRO. It seemed to them different.

SOL. [*with suppressed irritation*]. So it was to see Ragnar that they came here—whilst I was out!

BRO. They came to call upon you—and at the same time to ask whether you would mind retiring——

SOL. [*angrily*]. Retire? I?

BRO. In case you thought Ragnar's drawings——

SOL. I? Retire in favour of your son!

BRO. Retire from the agreement, they meant.

SOL. Oh, it comes to the same thing. [*Laughs angrily.*] So that is it, is it? Halvard Solness is to see about retiring now! To make room for younger men! For the very youngest, perhaps! He must make room! Room! Room!

BRO. Why, good heavens! there is surely room for more than one single man——

SOL. Oh, there's not so very much room to spare either. But, be that as it may—I will never retire! I will never give way to anybody! Never of my own free will. Never in this world will I do that.

BRO. [*rises with difficulty*]. Then I am to pass out of life without any certainty? Without a gleam of happi-

ness? Without any faith or trust in Ragnar? Without having seen a single piece of work of his doing? Is that to be the way of it?

SOL. [*turns half aside, and mutters*]. H'm—don't ask more just now.

BRO. I must have an answer to this one question. Am I to pass out of life in such utter poverty?

SOL. [*seems to struggle with himself; finally he says, in a low but firm voice:*] You must pass out of life as best you can.

BRO. Then be it so. [*He goes up the room.*]

SOL. [*following him, half in desperation*]. Don't you understand that I cannot help it? I am what I am, and I cannot change my nature!

BRO. No,no; I suppose you can't. [*Reels and supports himself against the sofa-table.*] May I have a glass of water?

SOL. By all means. [*Fills a glass and hands it to him.*]

BRO. Thanks. [*Drinks and puts the glass down again.*]

[SOLNESS *goes up and opens the door of the draughtsmen's office.*]

SOL. Ragnar—you must come and take your father home. [RAGNAR *rises quickly. He and* KAIA *come into the work-room.*]

RAG. What is the matter, father?

BRO. Give me your arm. Now let us go.

RAG. Very well. You had better put your things on, too, Kaia.

SOL. Miss Fosli must stay—just for a moment. There is a letter I want written.

BRO. [*looks at* SOLNESS]. Good night. Sleep well—if you can.

SOL. Good night.

[BROVIK *and* RAGNAR *go out by the hall-door.* KAIA *goes to the desk.* SOLNESS *stands with bent head, to the right, by the arm-chair.*]

KAIA [*dubiously*]. Is there any letter ——?

SOL. [*curtly*]. No, of course not. [*Looks sternly at her.*] Kaia!

KAIA [*anxiously, in a low voice*]. Yes!

SOL. [*points imperatively to a spot on the floor*]. Come here! At once!

KAIA [*hesitatingly*]. Yes.

SOL. [*as before*]. Nearer!

KAIA [*obeying*]. What do you want with me?

SOL. [*looks at her for a while*]. Is it you I have to thank for all this?

KAIA. No, no, don't think that!

SOL. But confess now—you want to get married!

KAIA [*softly*]. Ragnar and I have been engaged for four or five years, and so—

SOL. And so you think it time there were an end to it. Is not that so?

KAIA. Ragnar and Uncle say I must. So I suppose I shall have to give in.

SOL. [*more gently*]. Kaia, don't you really care a little bit for Ragnar, too?

KAIA. I cared very much for Ragner once—before I came here to you.

SOL. But you don't now? Not in the least?

KAIA [*passionately, clasping her hands and holding them out towards him*]. Oh, you know very well there is only one person I care for now! One, and one only, in all the world! I shall never care for anyone else.

SOL. Yes, you say that. And yet go away from me—leave me alone here with everything on my hands.

KAIA. But could I not stay with you, even if Ragnar——?

SOL. [*repudiating the idea*]. No, no, that is quite impossible. If Ragnar leaves me and starts work on his own account, then of course he will need you himself.

KAIA [*wringing her hands*]. Oh, I feel as if I could not be separated from you! It's quite, quite impossible!

SOL. Then be sure you get those foolish notions out of Ragnar's head. Marry him as much as you please—[*alters his tone.*]—I mean—don't let him throw up his good situation with me. For then I can keep you, too, my dear Kaia.

KAIA. Oh, yes, how lovely that would be if it could only be managed!

SOL. [*clasps her head with his two hands and whispers*]. For I cannot get on without you, you see. I must have you with me every single day.

KAIA [*in nervous exaltation*]. My God! My God!

Solness [*kisses her hair*]. Kaia—Kaia!

KAIA [*sinks down before him*]. Oh, how good you are to me! How unspeakably good you are!

SOL. [*vehemently*]. Get up! For goodness' sake get up! I think I hear some one! [*He helps her to rise. She staggers over to the desk.*]

MRS. S. *enters by the door on the right. She looks thin and wasted with grief, but shows traces of bygone beauty. Blonde ringlets. Dressed with good taste, wholly in black. Speaks somewhat slowly and in a plaintive voice.*

MRS. S. [*in the doorway*]. Halvard!

SOL. [*turns*]. Oh, are you there, my dear——?

MRS. S. [*with a glance at* KAIA]. I am afraid I am disturbing you.

SOL. Not in the least. Miss Fosli has only a short letter to write.

MRS. S. Yes, so I see.

SOL. What do you want with me, Aline?

MRS. S. I merely wanted to tell you that Dr. Herdal is in the drawing-room. Won't you come and see him, Halvard?

SOL. [*looks suspiciously at her*]. H'm—is the doctor so very anxious to talk to me?

MRS. S. Well, not exactly anxious. He really came to see me; but he would like to say how-do-you-do to you at the same time.

SOL. [*laughs to himself*]. Yes, I daresay. Well, you must ask him to wait a little.

MRS. S. Then you will come in presently?

SOL. Perhaps I will. Presently, presently, dear. In a little while.

MRS. S. [*glancing at* KAIA]. Well, now, don't forget, Halvard.

[*Withdraws and closes the door behind her.*]

KAIA [*softly*]. Oh! dear, oh! dear—I am sure Mrs. Solness thinks ill of me in some way!

SOL. Oh, not in the least. Not more than usual at any rate. But all the same, you had better go now, Kaia.

KAIA. Yes, yes, now I must go.

SOL. [*severely*]. And mind you get that matter settled for me. Do you hear?

KAIA. Oh, if it only depended on me——

SOL. I will have it settled, I say! And to-morrow, too—not a day later!

KAIA [*terrified*]. If there's nothing

else for it, I am quite willing to break off the engagement.

Sol. [*angrily*]. Break it off. Are you mad? Would you think of breaking it off?

Kaia [*distracted*]. Yes, if necessary. For I must—I must stay here with you! I can't leave you! That is utterly —utterly impossible!

Sol. [*with a sudden outburst*]. But deuce take it—how about Ragnar then! It's Ragnar that I——

Kaia [*looks at him with terrified eyes*]. It is chiefly on Ragnar's account, that—that you——

Sol. [*collecting himself*]. No, no, of course not! You don't understand me either. [*Gently and softly*]. Of course it is you I want to keep—you above everything, Kaia. But for that very reason, you must prevent Ragnar, too, from throwing up his situation. There, there,—now go home.

Kaia. Yes, yes—good night, then.

Sol. Good-night. [*As she is going.*] Oh, stop a moment! Are Ragnar's drawings in there?

Kaia. I did not see him take them with him.

Sol. Then just go and find them for me. I might perhaps glance over them, after all.

Kaia [*happy*]. Oh yes, please do!

Sol. For your sake, Kaia dear. Now, let me have them at once, please. [Kaia *hurries into the draughtsmen's office, searches anxiously in the table-drawer, finds a portfolio and brings it with her.*]

Kaia. Here are all the drawings.

Sol. Good. Put them down there on the table.

Kaia [*putting down the portfolio*]. Good-night, then. [*Beseechingly.*] And please, please think kindly of me.

Sol. Oh, that I always do. Good-night, my dear little Kaia. [*Glances to the right.*] Go, go now!

Mrs. Solness *and* Dr. Herdal *enter by the door on the right. He is a stoutish elderly man, with a round, good-humoured face, clean shaven, with thin, light hair, and gold spectacles.*

Mrs. S. [*still in the doorway*]. Halvard, I cannot keep the doctor any longer.

Sol. Well then, come in here.

Mrs. S. [*to Kaia, who is turning down the desk-lamp*]. Have you finished the letter already, Miss Fosli?

Kaia. [*in confusion*]. The letter—? ——?

Sol. Yes, it was quite a short one.

Mrs. S. It must have been very short.

Sol. You may go now, Miss Fosli. And please come in good time to-morrow morning.

Kaia. I will be sure to. Good-night, Mrs. Solness. [*She goes out by the hall door.*]

Mrs. S. She must be quite an acquisition to you, Halvard, this Miss Fosli.

Sol. Yes indeed. She is useful in all sorts of ways.

Mrs. S. So it seems.

Dr. H. Is she good at bookkeeping, too?

Sol. Well—of course she has had a good deal of practice during these two years. And then she is so nice and willing to do whatever one asks of her.

Mrs. S. Yes, that must be very delightful——

Sol. It is. Especially when one is not too much accustomed to that sort of thing.

MRS. S. [*in a tone of gentle remonstrance*]. Can you say that, Halvard?

SOL. Oh, no, no, my dear Aline; I beg your pardon.

MRS. S. There's no occasion.—Well then, doctor, you will come back later on, and have a cup of tea with us?

DR. H. I have only that one patient to see, and then I'll come back.

MRS. S. Thank you. [*She goes out by the door on the right.*]

SOL. Are you in a hurry, doctor?

DR. H. No, not at all.

SOL. May I have a little chat with you?

DR. H. With the greatest of pleasure.

SOL. Then let us sit down. [*He motions the doctor to take the rocking-chair, and sits down himself in the armchair. Looks searchingly at him.*] Tell me—did you notice anything odd about Aline?

DR. H. Do you mean just now, when she was here?

SOL. Yes, in her manner to me. Did you notice anything?

DR. H. [*smiling*]. Well, I admit—one couldn't well avoid noticing that your wife—h'm——

SOL. Well?

DR. H. —that your wife is not particularly found of this Miss Fosli.

SOL. Is that all? I have noticed that myself.

DR. H. And I must say I am scarcely surprised at it.

SOL. At what?

DR. H. That she should not exactly approve of your seeing so much of another woman, all day and every day.

SOL. No, no, I suppose you are right there—and Aline too. But it's impossible to make any change.

DR. H. Could you not engage a clerk?

SOL. The first man that came to hand? No, thank you—that would never do for me.

DR. H. But now, if your wife——? Suppose, with her delicate health, all this tries her too much?

SOL. Even then—I might almost say—it can make no difference. I must keep Kaia Fosli. No one else can fill her place.

DR. H. No one else?

SOL. [*curtly*]. No, no one.

DR. H. [*drawing his chair closer.*] Now listen to me, my dear Mr. Solness. May I ask you a question, quite between ourselves?

SOL. By all means.

DR. H. Women, you see—in certain matters, they have a deucedly keen intuition—

SOL. They have indeed. There is not the least doubt of that. But—?

DR. H. Well, tell me now—if your wife can't endure this Kaia Fosli——?

SOL. Well, what then?

DR. H. —may she not have just—just the least little bit of reason for this instinctive dislike?

SOL. [*looks at him and rises*]. Oho!

DR. H. Now don't be offended—but hasn't she?

SOL. [*with curt decision*]. No.

DR. H. No reason of any sort?

SOL. No other reason than her own suspicious nature.

DR. H. I know you have known a good many women in your time.

SOL. Yes, I have.

DR. H. And have been a good deal taken with some of them, too.

SOL. Oh, yes, I don't deny it.

DR. H. But as regards Miss Fosli,

then? There is nothing of that sort in the case?

SOL. No; nothing at all—on my side.

DR. H. But on her side?

SOL. I don't think you have any right to ask that question, doctor.

DR. H. Well, you know, we were discussing your wife's intuition.

SOL. So we were. And for that matter—[*lowers his voice*]—Aline's intuition, as you call it—in a certain sense, it has not been so far astray.

DR. H. Aha! there we have it!

SOL. [*sits down*]. Doctor Herdal—I am going to tell you a strange story—if you care to listen to it.

DR. H. I like listening to strange stories.

SOL. Very well then. I daresay you recollect that I took Knut Brovik and his son into my employment—after the old man's business had gone to the dogs.

DR. H. Yes, so I have understood.

SOL. You see, they really are clever fellows, these two. Each of them has talent in his own way. But then the son took it into his head to get engaged; and the next thing, of course, was that he wanted to get married—and begin to build on his own account. That is the way with all these young people.

DR. H. [*laughing*]. Yes, they have a bad habit of wanting to marry.

SOL. Just so. But of course that did not suit my plans; for I needed Ragnar myself—and the old man too. He is exceedingly good at calculating bearing-strains and cubic contents—and all that sort of deviltry, you know.

DR. H. Oh, yes, no doubt that's indispensable.

SOL. Yes, it is. But Ragnar was absolutely bent on setting to work for himself. He would hear of nothing else.

DR. H. But he has stayed with you all the same.

SOL. Yes, I'll tell you how that came about. One day this girl, Kaia Fosli, came to see them on some errand or other. She had never been here before. And when I saw how utterly infatuated they were with each other, the thought occurred to me: if I could only get her into the office here, then perhaps Ragnar would stay where he is.

DR. H. That was not at all a bad idea.

SOL. Yes, but at the time I did not breathe a word of what was in my mind, I merely stood and looked at her—and kept on wishing intently that I could have her here. Then I talked to her a little, in a friendly way—about one thing and another. And then she went away.

DR. H. Well?

SOL. Well, then, next day, pretty late in the evening, when old Brovik and Ragnar had gone home, she came here again, and behaved as if I had made an arrangement with her.

DR. H. An arrangement? What about?

SOL. About the very thing my mind had been fixed on. But I hadn't said one single word about it.

DR. H. That was most extraordinary.

SOL. Yes, was it not? And now she wanted to know what she was to do here—whether she could begin the very next morning, and so forth.

DR. H. Don't you think she did it in order to be with her sweetheart?

SOL. That was what occurred to me at first. But no, that was not it. She seemed to drift quite away from him—when once she had come here to me.

DR. H. She drifted over to you, then?

SOL. Yes, entirely. If I happen to look at her when her back is turned, I can tell that she feels it. She quivers and trembles the moment I come near her. What do you think of that?

DR. H. H'm—that's not very hard to explain.

SOL. Well, but what about the other things? That she believed I had said to her what I had only wished and willed—silently—inwardly—to myself? What do you say to that? Can you explain that, Dr. Herdal?

DR. H. No, I won't undertake to do that.

SOL. I felt sure you would not; and so I have never cared to talk about it till now. But it's a cursed nuisance to me in the long run, you understand. Here I have to go on day after day pretending——. And it's a shame to treat her so, poor girl. [*Vehemently.*] But I cannot do anything else. For if she runs away from me—then Ragnar will be off too.

DR. H. And you have not told your wife the rights of the story?

SOL. No.

DR. H. Then why on earth don't you?

SOL. [*looks fixedly at him, and says in a low voice:*] Because I seem to find a sort of—of salutary self-torture in allowing Aline to do me an injustice.

DR. H. [*shakes his head*]. I don't in the least understand what you mean.

SOL. Well, you see—it is like paying off a little bit of a huge, immeasurable debt——

DR. H. To your wife?

SOL. Yes; and that always helps to relieve one's mind a little. One can breathe more freely for a while, you understand.

DR. H. No, goodness knows, I don't understand at all——

SOL. [*breaking off, rises again*]. Well, well, well—then we won't talk any more about it. [*He saunters across the room, returns, and stops beside the table. Looks at the doctor with a sly smile.*] I suppose you think you have drawn me out nicely now, doctor?

DR. H. [*with some irritation*]. Drawn you out? Again I have not the faintest notion what you mean, Mr. Solness.

SOL. Oh, come, out with it; I have seen it quite clearly, you know.

DR. H. What have you seen?

SOL. [*in a low voice, slowly*]. That you have been quietly keeping an eye upon me.

DR. H. That *I* have! And why in all the world should I do that?

SOL. Because you think that I—— [*Passionately.*] Why, devil take it—you think the same of me as Aline does.

DR. H. And what does she think about you?

SOL. [*having recovered his self-control*]. She has begun to think that I am—that I am—ill.

DR. H. Ill! You! She has never hinted such a thing to me. Why, what can she think is the matter with you?

SOL. [*leans over the back of the chair and whispers*]. Aline has made up her mind that I am mad. That is what she thinks.

DR. H. [*rising*]. Why, my dear good fellow——!

SOL. Yes, on my soul she does! I tell you it is so. And she has got you to think the same! Oh, I can assure you, doctor, I see it in your face as clearly as possible. You don't take me in so easily, I can tell you.

DR. H. [*looks at him in amazement*]. Never, Mr. Solness—never has such a thought entered my mind.

SOL. [*with an incredulous smile*]. Really? Has it not?

DR. H. No, never! Nor your wife's mind either, I am convinced. I could almost swear to that.

SOL. Well, I wouldn't advise you to. For, in a certain sense, you see, perhaps—perhaps she is not so far wrong in thinking something of the kind.

DR. H. Come now, I really must say—

SOL. [*interrupting, with a sweep of his hand*]. Well, well, my dear doctor—don't let us discuss this any further. We had better agree to differ. [*Changes to a tone of quiet amusement.*] But look here now, doctor—h'm——

DR. H. What then?

SOL. Since you don't believe that I am—ill—and crazy, and mad, and so forth——

SOL. Then I daresay you fancy that I am an extremely happy man.

DR. H. Is that mere fancy?

SOL. [*laughs*]. No, no—of course not! Heaven forbid! Only think—to be Solness the master builder! Halvard Solness! What could be more delightful?

DR. H. Yes, I must say it seems to me you have had the luck on your side to an astounding degree.

SOL. [*suppresses a gloomy smile*]. So I have, I can't complain on that score.

DR. H. First of all that grim old robbers' castle was burnt down for you. And that was certainly a great piece of luck.

SOL. [*seriously*]. It was the home of Aline's family. Remember that.

DR. H. Yes, it must have been a great grief to her.

SOL. She has not got over it to this day—not in all these twelve or thirteen years.

DR. H. Ah, but what followed must have been the worst blow for her.

SOL. The one thing with the other.

DR. H. But you—yourself—you rose upon the ruins. You began as a poor boy from a country village—and now you are at the head of your profession. Ah, yes, Mr. Solness, you have undoubtedly had the luck on your side.

SOLNESS [*looking at him with embarrassment*]. Yes, but that is just what makes me so horribly afraid.

DR. H. Afraid? Because you have the luck on your side!

SOL. It terrifies me—terrifies me every hour of the day. For sooner or later the luck must turn, you see.

DR. H. Oh, nonsense! What should make the luck turn?

SOL. [*with firm assurance*]. The younger generation.

DR. H. Pooh! The younger generation! You are not laid on the shelf yet, I should hope. Oh, no—your position here is probably firmer now than it has even been.

SOL. The luck will turn. I know it—I feel the day approaching. Some one or other will take it into his head to say: Give me a chance! And then

all the rest will come clamouring after him, and shake their fists at me and shout: Make room—make room—make room! Yes, just you see, doctor—presently the younger generation will come knocking at my door——

Dr. H. [*laughing*]. Well, and what if they do?

Sol. What if they do? Then there's an end of Halvard Solness. [*There is a knock at the door on the left*].

Sol. [*starts*]. What's that? Did you not hear something?

Dr. H. Some one is knocking at the door.

Sol. [*loudly*]. Come in.

[Hilda Wangel *enters by the hall door. She is of middle height, supple, and delicately built. Somewhat sunburnt. Dressed in a tourist costume, with skirt caught up for walking, a sailor's collar open at the throat, and a small sailor hat on her head. Knapsack on back, plaid in strap, and alpenstock.*]

Hilda [*goes straight up to Solness, her eyes sparkling with happiness*]. Good evening!

Sol. [*looks doubtfully at her*]. Good evening——

Hilda [*laughs*]. I almost believe you don't recognise me!

Sol. No—I must admit that—just for the moment——

Dr. H. [*approaching*]. But I recognise you, my dear young lady——

Hilda [*pleased*]. Oh, is it you that ——

Dr. H. Of course it is. [*To Solness.*] We met at one of the mountain stations this summer. [*To Hilda.*] What became of the other ladies?

Hilda. Oh, they went westward.

Dr. H. They didn't much like all the fun we used to have in the evenings.

Hilda. No, I believe they didn't.

Dr. H. [*holds up his finger at her.*] And I am afraid it can't be denied that you flirted a little with us.

Hilda. Well that was better fun than to sit there knitting stockings with all those old women.

Dr. H. [*laughs.*] There I entirely agree with you.

Sol. Have you come to town this evening?

Hilda. Yes, I have just arrived.

Dr. H. Quite alone, Miss Wangel?

Hilda. Oh, yes!

Sol. Wangel. Is your name Wangel?

Hilda [*looks in amused surprise at him*]. Yes, of course it is.

Sol. Then you must be a daughter of the district doctor up at Lysanger?

Hilda [*as before*]. Yes, who else's daughter should I be?

Sol. Oh, then I suppose we met up there, that summer when I was building a tower on the old church.

Hilda [*more seriously*]. Yes, of course it was then we met.

Sol. Well, that is a long time ago.

Hilda [*looks hard at him*]. It is exactly the ten years.

Sol. You must have been a mere child then, I should think.

Hilda [*carelessly*]. Well, I was twelve or thirteen.

Dr. H. Is this the first time you have ever been up to town, Miss Wangel?

Hilda. Yes, it is indeed.

Sol. And don't you know any one here?

Hilda. Nobody but you. And of course, your wife.

Sol. So you know her, too?

HILDA. Only a little. We spent a few days together at the sanatorium.

SOL. Ah, up there?

HILDA. She said I might come and pay her a visit if ever I came up to town. [*Smiles.*] Not that that was necessary.

SOL. Odd that she should never have mentioned it.

[*Hilda puts her stick down by the stove, takes off the knapsack and lays it and the plaid on the sofa.* DR. HERDAL *offers to help her.* SOLNESS *stands and gazes at her.*]

HILDA [*going towards him.*] Well, now I must ask you to let me stay the night here.

SOL. I am sure there will be no difficulty about that.

HILDA. For I have no other clothes than those I stand in, except a change of linen in my knapsack. And that has to go to the wash, for it's very dirty.

SOL. Oh, yes, that can be managed. Now I'll just let my wife know——

DR. H. Meanwhile I will go and see my patient.

SOL. Yes, do; and come again later on.

DR. H. [*playfully, with a glance at* HILDA]. Oh, that I will, you may be very certain! [*Laughs.*] So your prediction has come true, Mr. Solness!

SOL. How so?

DR. H. The younger generation did come knocking at your door.

SOL. [*cheerfully*]. Yes, but in a very different way from what I meant.

DR. H. Very different, yes. That's undeniable.

[*He goes out by the hall door. Solness opens the door on the right and speaks into the side room.*]

SOL. Aline! Will you come in here, please. Here is a friend of yours—Miss Wangel.

MRS. S. [*appears in the doorway*]. Who do you say it is? [*Sees* HILDA.] Oh, is it you, Miss Wangel? [*Goes up to her and offers her hand.*] So you have come to town after all.

SOL. Miss Wangel has this moment arrived; and she would like to stay the night here.

MRS. S. Here with us? Oh, yes, certainly.

SOL. Till she can get things a little in order, you know.

MRS. S. I will do the best I can for you. It's no more than my duty. I suppose your trunk is coming on later?

HILDA. I have no trunk.

MRS. S. Well, it will be all right, I daresay. In the meantime, you must excuse my leaving you here with my husband, until I can get a room made a little comfortable for you.

SOL. Can we not give her one of the nurseries? They are all ready as it is.

MRS. S. Oh, yes. There we have room and to spare. [*To Hilda.*] Sit down now, and rest a little. [*She goes out to the right.*]

[HILDA, *with her hands behind her back, strolls about the room and looks at various objects.* SOLNESS *stands in front, beside the table, also with his hands behind his back, and follows her with his eyes.*]

HILDA [*stops and looks at him.*] Have you several nurseries?

SOL. There are three nurseries in the house.

HILDA. That's a lot. Then I suppose you have a great many children?

SOL. No. We have no child. But now you can be the child here for the time being.

HILDA. For to-night, yes. I shall not cry. I mean to sleep as sound as a stone.

SOL. Yes, you must be very tired, I should think.

HILDA. Oh, no! But all the same—— It's so delicious to lie and dream.

SOL. Do you dream much of nights?

HILDA. Oh, yes! Almost always.

SOL. What do you dream about most?

HILDA. I shan't tell you to-night. Another time, perhaps.

[*She again strolls about her room, stops at the desk and turns over the books and papers a little.*]

SOL. [*approaching.*] Are you searching for anything?

HILDA. No, I am merely looking at all these things. [*Turns.*] Perhaps I mustn't?

SOL. Oh, by all means.

HILDA. Is it you that write in this great ledger?

SOL. No, it's my bookkeeper.

HILDA. Is it a woman?

SOL. [*smiles.*] Yes.

HILDA. One you employ here, in your office?

SOL. Yes.

HILDA. Is she married?

SOL. No, she is single.

HILDA. Oh, indeed!

SOL. But I believe she is soon going to be married.

HILDA. That's a good thing for her.

SOL. But not such a good thing for me. For then I shall have nobody to help me.

HILDA. Can't you get hold of some one else who will do just as well?

SOL. Perhaps you would stay here and write in the ledger?

HILDA [*measures him with a glance*]. Yes, I daresay! No, thank you—nothing of that sort for me.

[*She again strolls across the room, and sits down in the rocking-chair.* SOLNESS *too goes to the table.*]

HILDA [*continuing*]. For there must surely be plenty of other things to be done here. [*Looks smiling at him.*] Don't you think so, too?

SOL. Of course. First of all, I suppose, you want to make a round of the shops and get yourself up in the height of fashion.

HILDA [*amused*]. No, I think I shall let that alone!

SOL. Indeed.

HILDA. For you must know I have run through all my money.

SOL [*laughs*]. Neither trunk nor money, then.

HILDA. Neither one nor the other. But never mind—it doesn't matter now.

SOL. Come now, I like you for that.

HILDA. Only for that?

SOL. For that among other things. [*Sits in the armchair.*] Is your father alive still?

HILDA. Yes, father's alive.

SOL. Perhaps you are thinking of studying here?

HILDA. No, that hadn't occurred to me.

SOL. But I suppose you will be staying for some time?

HILDA. That must depend upon circumstances.

[*She sits awhile rocking herself and looking at him, half seriously, half with a suppressed smile. Then she takes off her hat and puts it on the table in front of her.*

HILDA. Mr. Solness!

SOL. Well?

HIL. Have you a very bad memory?

Sol. A bad memory? No, not that am aware of.

Hilda. Then you have nothing to ay to me about what happened up here?

Sol. [*in momentary surprise*]. Up at ysanger? [*Indifferently.*] Why, it vas nothing much to talk about, it eems to me.

Hilda [*looks reproachfully at him*]. Iow can you sit there and say such ings?

Sol. Well, then, you talk to me bout it.

Hilda. When the tower was finished, e had grand doings in the town.

Sol. Yes, I shall not easily forget at day.

Hilda [*smiles*]. Will you not? That omes well from you.

Sol. Comes well?

Hilda. There was music in the urchyard—and many, many hundreds f people. We school-girls were dressed white; and we all carried flags.

Sol. Ah yes, those flags—I can tell ou I remember them!

Hilda. Then you climbed right up e scaffolding, straight to the very p; and you had a great wreath with ou; and you hung that wreath right vay up on the weather-vane.

Sol. [*curtly interrupting*]. I always d that in those days. It was an old stom.

Hilda. It was so wonderfully thrill- g to stand below and look up at you. ancy, if he should fall over! He—the aster builder himself!

Sol. [*as if to divert her from the bject*]. Yes, yes, yes, that might very ell have happened, too. For one of ose white-frocked little devils,—she went on in such a way, and screamed up at me so——

Hilda [*sparkling with pleasure*]. "Hurrah for Master Builder Solness!" Yes!

Sol. —and waved and flourished with her flag, so that I—so that it almost made me giddy to look at it.

Hilda [*in a lower voice, seriously*]. That little devil—that was *I*.

Sol. [*fixes his eyes steadily upon her*]. I am sure of that now. It must have been you.

Hilda [*lively again*]. Oh, it was so gloriously thrilling! I could not have believed there was a builder in the whole world that could build such a tremendously high tower. And then, that you yourself should stand at the very top of it, as large as life! And that you should not be the least dizzy! It was that above everything that made one—made one dizzy to think of.

Sol. How could you be so certain that I was not——?

Hilda [*scouting the idea*]. No indeed! Oh, no! I knew that instinctively. For if you had been, you could never have stood up there and sung.

Sol. [*looks at her in astonishment*]. Sung? Did *I* sing?

Hilda. Yes, I should think you did.

Sol. [*shakes his head*]. I have never sung a note in my life.

Hilda. Yes, indeed, you sang then. It sounded like harps in the air.

Sol. [*thoughtfully*]. This is very strange—all this.

Hilda [*is silent awhile, looks at him and says in a low voice:*] But then,—it was after that—and the real thing happened.

Sol. The real thing?

Hilda [*sparkling with vivacity*].

Yes, I surely don't need to remind you of that?

SOL. Oh, yes, do remind me a little of that, too.

HILDA. Don't you remember that a great dinner was given in your honour at the Club?

SOL. Yes, to be sure. It must have been the same afternoon, for I left the place next morning.

HILDA. And from the Club you were invited to come round to our house to supper.

SOL. Quite right, Miss Wangel. It is wonderful how all these trifles have impressed themselves on your mind.

HILDA. Trifles! I like that! Perhaps it was a trifle, too, that I was alone in the room when you came in?

SOL. Were you alone?

HILDA [*without answering him*]. You didn't call me a little devil then?

SOL. No, I suppose I did not.

HILDA. You said I was lovely in my white dress, and that I looked like a little princess.

SOL. I have no doubt you did, Miss Wangel.—And besides—I was feeling so buoyant and free that day——

HILDA. And then you said that when I grew up I should be your princess.

SOL. [*laughing a little*]. Dear, dear—did I say that too?

HILDA. Yes, you did. And when I asked how long I should have to wait, you said that you would come again in ten years—like a troll and carry me off—to Spain or some such place. And you promised you would buy me a kingdom there.

SOL. [*as before*]. Yes, after a good dinner one doesn't haggle about the halfpence. But did I really say all that?

HILDA [*laughs to herself*]. Yes. And you told me, too, what the kingdom was to be called.

SOL. Well, what was it?

HILDA. It was to be called the kingdom of Orangia, you said.

SOL. Well, that was an appetising name.

HILDA. No, I didn't like it a bit; for it seemed as though you wanted to make game of me.

SOL. I am sure that cannot have been my intention.

HILDA. No, I should hope not—considering what you did next——

SOL. What in the world did I do next?

HILDA. Well, that's the finishing touch, if you have forgotten that too. I should have thought no one could help remembering such a thing as that.

SOL. Yes, yes, just give me a hint, and then perhaps—— Well——

HILDA [*looks fixedly at him*]. You came and kissed me, Mr. Solness.

SOL. [*open-mouthed, rising from his chair*]. *I* did!

HILDA. Yes, indeed you did. You took me in both your arms, and bent my head back, and kissed me—many times.

SOL. Now really, my dear Miss Wangel——!

HILDA [*rises*]. You surely cannot mean to deny it?

SOL. Yes, I do. I deny it altogether!

HILDA [*looks scornfully at him*]. Oh, indeed!

[*She turns and goes slowly close up to the stove, where she remains standing motionless, her face averted from him, her hands behind her back. Short pause.*

SOL. [*goes cautiously up behind her*]. Miss Wangel—!

HILDA [*is silent and does not move*].

SOL. *Don't stand there like a statue.* You must have dreamt all this. [*Lays his hand on her arm.*] Now just listen——

HILDA [*makes an impatient movement with her arm*].

SOL. [*as a thought flashes upon him*]. Or——! Wait a moment! There is something under all this, you may depend!

HILDA [*does not move*].

SOL. [*in a low voice, but with emphasis*]. I must have thought all that. I must have wished it—have willed it —have longed to do it. And then——. May not that be the explanation?

HILDA [*is still silent*].

SOL. [*impatiently*]. Oh, very well, deuce take it all—then I did it, I suppose.

HILDA [*turns her head a little, but without looking at him*]. Then you admit it now?

SOL. Yes—whatever you like.

HILDA. You came and put your arms around me?

SOL. Oh, yes!

HILDA. And bent my head back?

SOL. Very far back.

HILDA. And kissed me?

SOL. Yes, I did.

HILDA. Many times?

SOL. As many as ever you like.

HILDA [*turns quickly towards him and has once more the sparkling expression of gladness in her eyes*]. Well, you see, I got it out of you at last!

SOL. [*with a slight smile*]. Yes—just think of my forgetting such a thing as that.

HILDA [*again a little sulky, retreats from him*]. Oh, you have kissed so many people in your time, I suppose.

SOL. No, you mustn't think that of me. [HILDA *seats herself in the armchair.* SOLNESS *stands and leans against the rocking-chair. Looks observantly at her.*] Miss Wangel!

HILDA. Yes!

SOL. How was it now? What came of all this—between us two?

HILDA. Why, nothing more came of it. You know that quite well. For then the other guests came in, and then —bah!

SOL. Quite so! The others came in. To think of my forgetting that too!

HILDA. Oh, you haven't really forgotten anything: you are only a little ashamed of it all. I am sure one doesn't forget things of that kind.

SOL. No, one would suppose not.

HILDA [*lively again, looks at him*]. Perhaps you have even forgotten what day it was?

SOL. What day——?

HILDA. Yes, on what day did you hang the wreath on the tower? Well? Tell me at once!

SOL. H'm—I confess I have forgotten the particular day. I only knew it was ten years ago. Some time in the autumn.

HILDA [*nods her head slowly several times*]. It was ten years ago—on the 19th of September.

SOL. Yes, it must have been about that time. Fancy your remembering that too! [*Stops.*] But wait a moment——! Yes—it's the 19th of September to-day.

HILDA. Yes, it is; and the ten years are gone. And you didn't come—as you promised me.

SOL. Promised you? Threatened, I suppose you mean?

HILDA. I don't think there was any sort of threat in that.

SOL. Well, then, a little bit of fun.

HILDA. Was that all you wanted? To make fun of me?

SOL. Well, or to have a little joke with you. Upon my soul, I don't recollect. But it must have been something of that kind; for you were a mere child then.

HILDA. Oh, perhaps I wasn't quite such a child either. Not such a mere chit as you imagine.

SOL. [*looks searchingly at her*]. Did you really and seriously expect me to come again?

HILDA [*conceals a half-teasing smile*]. Yes, indeed; I did expect that of you.

SOL. That I should come back to your home, and take you away with me?

HILDA. Just like a troll—yes.

SOL. And make a princess of you?

HILDA. That's what you promised.

SOL. And give you a kingdom as well?

HILDA [*looks up at the ceiling*]. Why not? Of course it need not have been an actual, every-day sort of kingdom.

SOL. But something else just as good?

HILDA. Yes, at least as good. [*Looks at him a moment.*] I thought, if you could build the highest church-towers in the world, you could surely manage to raise a kingdom of one sort or another as well.

SOL. [*shakes his head*]. I can't quite make you out, Miss Wangel.

HILDA. Can you not? To me it seems all so simple.

SOL. No, I can't make up my mind whether you mean all you say, or are simply having a joke with me.

HILDA [*smiles*]. Making fun of you, perhaps? I, too?

SOL. Yes, exactly. Making fun—of both of us. [*Looks at her.*] Is it long since you found out that I was married?

HILDA. I have known it all along. Why do you ask me that?

SOL. [*lightly*]. Oh, well, it just occurred to me. [*Looks earnestly at her, and says in a low voice*]. What have you come for?

HILDA. I want my kingdom. The time is up.

SOL. [*laughs involuntarily.*] What a girl you are!

HILDA [*gaily*]. Out with my kingdom, Mr. Solness! [*Raps with her fingers*]. The kingdom on the table!

SOL. [*pushing the rocking-chair nearer and sitting down.*] Now, seriously speaking—what have you come for? What do you really want to do here?

HILDA. Oh, first of all, I want to go around and look at all the things that you have built.

SOL. That will give you plenty of exercise.

HILDA. Yes, I know you have built a tremendous lot.

SOL. I have indeed—especially of late years.

HILDA. Many church-towers among the rest? Immensely high ones?

SOL. No. I build no church towers now. Nor churches either.

HILDA. What do you build then?

SOL. Homes for human beings.

HILDA [*reflectively*]. Couldn't you build a little—a little bit of a church-tower over these homes as well?

SOL. [*starting*]. What do you mean by that?

HILDA. I mean—something that points—points up into the free air. With the vane at a dizzy height.

SOL. [*pondering a little*]. Strange that you should say that—for that is just what I am most anxious to do.

HILDA [*impatiently*]. Why don't you do it, then?

SOL. [*shakes his head*]. No, the people will not have it.

HILDA. Fancy their not wanting it!

SOL. [*more lightly*]. But now I am building a new home for myself—just opposite here.

HILDA. For yourself?

SOL. Yes. It is almost finished. And on that there is a tower.

HIAL. A high tower?

SOL. Yes.

HIL. Very high?

SOL. No doubt people will say it is too high—too high for a dwelling-house.

HILDA. I'll go out and look at that tower the first thing to-morrow morning.

SOL. [*sits resting his cheek on his hand, and gazes at her*]. Tell me, Miss Wangel—what is your name? Your Christian name, I mean?

HILDA. Why, Hilda, of course.

SOL. [*as before*]. Hilda? Indeed?

HILDA. Don't you remember that? You called me Hilda yourself—that day you misbehaved.

SOL. Did I really?

HILDA. But then you said "little Hilda"; and I didn't like that.

SOL. Oh, you didn't like that, Miss Hilda?

HILDA. No, not at such a time as that. But—"Princess Hilda"—that will sound very well, I think.

SOL. Very well indeed. Princess Hilda of—of—what was to be the name of the kingdom?

HILDA. Pooh! I won't have anything to do with that stupid kingdom. I have set my heart upon quite a different one!

SOL. [*has leaned back in the chair, still gazing at her*]. Isn't it strange ——? The more I think of it now, the more it seems to me as though I had gone about all these years torturing myself with—h'm——

HILDA. With what?

SOL. With the effort to recover something—some experience, which I seemed to have forgotten. But I never had the least inkling of what it could be.

HILDA. You should have tied a knot in your pockethandkerchief, Mr. Solness.

SOL. In that case, I should simply have had to go racking my brains to discover what the knot could mean.

HILDA. Oh, yes, I suppose there are trolls of that kind in the world, too.

SOL. [*rises slowly*]. What a good thing it is that you have come to me now.

HILDA [*looks deeply into his eyes*]. Is it a good thing?

SOL. For I have been so lonely here. I have been gazing so helplessly at it all. [*In a lower voice.*] I must tell you —I have begun to be so afraid—so terribly afraid of the younger generation.

HILDA. [*with a little snort of contempt*]. Pooh—is the younger generation a thing to be afraid of?

SOL. It is indeed. And that is why I have locked and barred myself in [*Mysteriously.*] I tell you the younger generation will one day come and thunder at my door! They will break in upon me!

HILDA. Then I should say you ought to go out and open the door to the younger generation.

SOL. Open the door?

HILDA. Yes. Let them come in to you on friendly terms as it were.

SOL. No, no, no! The younger generation—it means retribition, you see. It comes, as if under a new banner, heralding the turn of fortune.

HILDA [*rises, looks at him, and says with a quivering twitch of her lips*]. Can I be of any use to you, Mr. Solness?

SOL. Yes, you can indeed! For you, too, come—under a new banner, it seems to me. Youth marshalled against youth——!

DR. HERDAL *comes in by the hall-door.*

DR. H. What—you and Miss Wangel here still?

SOL. Yes. We have had no end of things to talk about.

HILDA. Both old and new.

DR. H. Have you really?

HILDA. Oh, it has been the greatest fun. For Mr. Solness—he has such a miraculous memory. All the least little details he remembers instantly.

MRS. SOLNESS *enters by the door on the right.*

MRS. S. Well, Miss Wangel, your room is quite ready for you now.

HILDA. Oh, how kind you are to me!

SOL. [*to* MRS. SOLNESS]. The nursery?

MRS. S. Yes, the middle one. But first let us go in to supper.

SOL. [*nods to* HILDA]. Hilda shall sleep in the nursery, she shall.

MRS. S. [*looks at him*]. Hilda?

SOL. Yes, Miss Wangel's name is Hilda. I knew her when she was a child.

MRS. S. Did you really, Halvard? Well, shall we go? Supper is on the table.

[*She takes* DR. HERDAL'S *arm and goes out with him to the right.* HILDA *has meanwhile been collecting her travelling things.*]

HILDA [*softly and rapidly to* SOLNESS]. Is it true, what you said? Can I be of use to you?

SOL. [*takes the things from her*]. You are the very being I have needed most.

HILDA [*looks at him with happy, wondering eyes and clasps her hands*]. But then, great heavens——!

SOL. [*eagerly*]. What——?

HILDA Then I have my kingdom!

SOL. [*involuntarily*]. Hilda——!

HILDA [*again with the quivering twitch of her lips*]. Almost—I was going to say.

[*She goes out to the right,* SOLNESS *follows her.*]

ACT II

Scene—*A prettily furnished small drawing-room in Solness house. In the back, a glass door leading out to the verandah and garden. The right-hand corner is cut off transversely by a large bay-window, in which are flower-stands. The left-hand corner is similarly cut off by a transverse wall, in which*

is a small door papered like the wall. On each side, an ordinary door. In front, on the right, a console table with a large mirror over it. Well-filled stand of plants and flowers. In front, on the left, a sofa with a table and chairs. Further back, a bookcase. Well forward in the room, before the bay windows, a small table and some chairs. It is early in the day.

SOLNESS *sits by the little table with* RAGNAR BROVIK'S *portfolio open in front of him. He is turning the drawings over and closely examining some of them.* MRS. SOLNESS *moves about noiselessly with a small watering-pot, attending to her flowers. She is dressed in black as before. Her hat, cloak and parasol lie on a chair near the mirror. Unobserved by her,* SOLNESS *now and again follows her with his eyes. Neither of them speaks.*

KAIA FOSLI *enters quietly by the door on the left.*

SOL. [*turns his head, and says in an off-hand tone of indifference*]. Well, is that you?

KAIA. I merely wished to let you know that I have come.

SOL. Yes, yes, that's all right. Hasn't Ragnar come too?

KAIA. Not well. He begs you to excuse him; he is obliged to keep his bed to-day.

SOL. Why, of course; by all means let him rest. But now, get to work.

KAIA. Yes. [*Pauses at the door.*] Do you wish to speak to Ragnar when he comes?

SOL. No—I don't know that I have anything particular to say to him.

[KAIA *goes out again to the left.* SOLNESS *remains seated, turning over the drawings.*]

MRS. S. [*over beside the plants*]. I wonder if he isn't going to die now, as well?

SOL. [*looks up to her*]. As well as who?

MRS. S. [*without answering*]. Yes, yes—depend upon it, Halvard, old Brovik is going to die too. You'll see that he will.

SOL. My dear Aline, ought you not to go out for a little walk?

MRS. S. Yes, I suppose I ought to. [*She continues to attend to the flowers.*]

SOL. [*bending over the drawings*]. Is she still asleep?

MRS. S. [*looking at him*]. Is it Miss Wangel you are sitting there thinking about?

SOL. [*indifferently*]. I just happened to recollect her.

MRS. S. Miss Wangel was up long ago.

SOL. Oh! was she?

MRS. S. When I went in to see her, she was busy putting her things in order.

[*She goes in front of the mirror and slowly begins to put on her hat.*]

SOL. [*after a short pause*]. So we have found a use for one of our nurseries after all, Aline.

MRS. S. Yes, we have.

SOL. That seems to me better than to have them all standing empty.

MRS. S. That emptiness is dreadful; you are right there.

SOL. [*closes the portfolio, rises and approaches her*]. You will find that we shall get on far better after this, Aline. Things will be more comfort-

ble. Life will be easier—especially or you.

MRS. S. [*looks at him*]. After this?

SOL. Yes, believe me, Aline——

MRS. S. Do you mean—because she as come here?

SOL. [*checking himself*]. I mean, f course—when once we have moved nto the new house.

MRS. S. [*takes her cloak*]. Ah, do ou think so, Halvard? Will it be etter then?

SOL. I can't think otherwise. And urely you think so too?

MRS. S. I think nothing at all about he new house.

SOL. [*cast down*]. It's hard for me o hear you say that; for you know t is mainly for your sake that I have uilt it.

[*He offers to help her on with her loak.*]

MRS. S. [*evades him*]. The fact is, ou do far too much for my sake.

SOL. [*with a certain vehemence*]. No, no, you really mustn't say that, Aline! I cannot bear to hear you say uch things!

MRS. S. Very well, then I won't ay it, Halvard.

SOL. But I stick to what *I* said. You'll see that things will be easier for ou in the new place.

MRS. S. O! heavens—easier for me ——!

SOL. [*eagerly*]. Yes, indeed they vill! You may be quite sure of that! For you see—there will be so very, ery much there that will remind you f your own home——

MRS. S. The home that used to be ather's and mother's—and that was urnt to the ground——

SOL. [*in a low voice*]. Yes, yes, my poor Aline. That was a terrible blow for you.

MRS. S. [*breaking out in lamentation.*] You may build as much as ever you like, Halvard—you can never build up again a real home for me!

SOL. [*crosses the room*]. Well in heaven's name, let us talk no more about it then.

MRS. S. Oh, yes, Halvard, I understand you very well. You are so anxious to spare me—and to find excuses for me too—as much as ever you can.

SOL. [*with astonishment in his eyes.*] You! Is it you—yourself, that you are talking about, Aline?

MRS. S. Yes, who else should it be but myself?

SOL. [*involuntarily to himself*]. That, too!

MRS. S. As for the old house, I wouldn't mind so much about that. When once misfortune was in the air —why——

SOL. Ah, you are right there. Misfortune will have its way—as the saying goes.

MRS. S. But it's what come of the fire—the dreadful thing that followed ——! That is the thing! That, that, that!

SOL. [*vehemently*]. Don't think about that, Aline!

MRS. S. Ah, that is exactly what I cannot help thinking about. And now, at last, I must speak about it, too; for I don't seem able to hear it any longer. And then never to be able to forgive myself——

SOL. [*exclaiming*]. Yourself——!

MRS. S. Yes, for I had duties on

both sides—both towards you and towards the little ones. I ought to have hardened myself—not to have let the horror take such hold upon me—nor the grief for the burning of my old home. [*Wrings her hands.*] Oh, Halvard, if I had only had the strength!

SOL. [*softly, much moved, comes closer*]. Aline—you must promise me never to think these thoughts any more. —Promise me that, dear!

MRS. S. Oh, promise, promise! One can promise anything.

SOL. [*clenches his hands and crosses the room*]. Oh, but this is hopeless, hopeless! Never a ray of sunlight! Not so much as a gleam of brightness to light up our home!

MRS. S. This is no home, Halvard.

SOL. Oh, no, you may well say that. [*Gloomily*]. And God knows whether you are not right in saying that it will be no better for us in the new house, either.

MRS. S. It will never be any better. Just as empty—just as desolate—there as here.

SOL. [*vehemently*]. Why in all the world have we built it then? Can you tell me that?

MRS. S. No; you must answer that question for yourself.

SOL. [*glances suspiciously at her*]. What do you mean by that, Aline?

MRS. S. What do I mean?

SOL. Yes, in the devil's name! You said it so strangely—as if you had hidden some meaning in it.

MRS. S. No, indeed, I assure you—

SOL. [*comes closer*]. Oh, come now —I know what I know. I have both my eyes and my ears about me, Aline —you may depend upon that!

MRS. S. Why what are you talking about? What is it?

SOL. [*places himself in front of her*]. Do you mean to say you don't find a kind of lurking, hidden meaning in the most innocent word I happen to say?

MRS. S. *I*, do you say? *I* do that?

SOL. [*laughs*]. Ho-ho-ho! It's natural enough, Aline! When you have a sick man on your hands——

MRS. S. [*anxiously*]. Sick? Are you ill, Halvard?

SOL. [*violently*]. A half-mad man then! A crazy man! Call me what you will.

MRS. S. [*feels blindly for a chair and sits down*]. Halvard—for God's sake——

SOL. But you are wrong, both you and the doctor. I am not in the state you imagine.

[*He walks up and down the room.* MRS. SOLNESS *follows him anxiously with her eyes. Finally he goes up to her.*]

SOL. [*calmly*]. In reality there is nothing whatever the matter with me.

MRS. S. No, there isn't, is there? But then what is it that troubles you so?

SOL. Why this, that I often feel ready to sink under this terrible burden of debt——

MRS. S. Debt, do you say? But you owe no one anything, Halvard!

SOL. [*softly, with emotion*]. I owe a boundless debt to you—to you—to you, Aline.

MRS. S. [*arises slowly*]. What is behind all this? You may just as well tell me at once.

SOL. But there is nothing behind it;

I have never done you any wrong—not wittingly and wilfully, at any rate. And yet—and yet it seems as though a crushing debt rested upon me and weighed me down.

MRS. S. A debt to me?

SOL. Chiefly to you.

MRS. S. Then you are—ill after all, Halvard.

SOL. [*gloomily*]. I suppose I must be—or not far from it. [*Looks toward the door to the right, which is opened at this moment.*] Ah! now it grows lighter.

HILDA WANGLE *comes in. She has made some alteration in her dress, and let down her skirt.*

HILDA. Good morning, Mr. Solness!

SOL. [*nods*] Slept well?

HILDA. Quite deliciously! Like a child in a cradle. Oh—I lay and stretched myself like—like a princess!

SOL. [*smiles a little*]. You were thoroughly comfortable then?

HILDA. I should think so.

SOL. And no doubt you dreamed, too.

HILDA. Yes, I did. But that was horrid.

SOL. Was it?

HILDA. Yes, for I dreamed I was falling over a frightfully high, sheer precipice. Do you never have that kind of dream?

SOL. Oh, yes—now and then——

HILDA. It's tremendously thrilling—when you fall and fall——

SOL. It seems to make one's blood run cold.

HILDA. Do you draw your legs up under you while you are falling?

SOL. Yes, as high as ever I can.

HILDA. So do I.

MRS. S. [*takes her parasol*]. I must go into town now, Halvard. [*To* HILDA.] And I'll try to get one or two things that you may require.

HILDA [*making a motion to throw her arms round her neck*]. Oh, you dear, sweet Mrs. Solness! You are really much too kind to me! Frightfully kind——

MRS. S. [*deprecatingly, freeing herself*]. Oh, not at all. It's only my duty, so I am very glad to do it.

HILDA [*offended, pouts*]. But really, I think I am quite fit to be seen in the streets—now that I've put my dress to rights. Or do you think I am not?

MRS. S. To tell you the truth, I think people would stare at you a little.

HILDA [*contemptuously*]. Pooh! Is that all? That only amuses me.

SOL. [*with suppressed ill-humour*]. Yes, but people might take it into their heads that you were mad too, you see.

HILDA. Mad? Are there so many mad people here in town, then?

SOL. [*points to his own forehead*]. Here you see one, at all events.

HILDA. You—Mr. Solness!

MRS. S. Oh! don't talk like that, my dear Halvard!

SOL. Have you not noticed that yet?

HILDA. No, I certainly have not. [*Reflects and laughs a little.*] And yet—perhaps in one single thing.

SOL. Ah! do you hear that, Aline?

MRS. S. What is that one single thing, Miss Wangel?

HILDA. No, I won't say.

SOL. Oh! yes, do!

HILDA. No thank you—I am not so mad as that.

Mrs. S. When you and Miss Wan-el are alone, I daresay she will tell ou, Halvard.

Sol. Ah—you think she will?

Mrs. S. Oh! yes, certainly. For you ave known her so well in the past. ver since she was a child—you tell e.

[*She goes out by the door on the ft.*]

Hilda. [*after a little while*]. Does our wife dislike me very much?

Sol. Did you think you noticed nything of the kind?

Hilda. Did you not notice it your-elf?

Sol. [*evasively*]. Aline has become xceedingly shy with strangers of late ears.

Hilda. Has she really?

Sol. But if only you could get to now her thoroughly——! Ah! she is good—so kind—so excellent a reature——

Hilda [*impatiently*]. But if she is l that—what made her say that about er duty?

Sol. Her duty?

Hilda. She said that she would go ut and buy something for me, because was her duty. Oh! I can't bear that gly, horrid word!

Sol. Why not?

Hilda. It sounds so cold, and sharp, nd stinging. Duty—duty—duty. on't you think so, too? Doesn't it em to sting you?

Sol. H'm—haven't thought much out it.

Hilda. Yes it does. And if she is good—as you say she is—why ould she talk in that way?

Sol. But, good Lord, what would you have had her say, then?

Hilda. She might have said she would do it because she had taken a tremendous fancy to me. She might have said something like that—something really warm and cordial, you understand.

Sol. [*looks at her*]. Is that how you would like to have it?

Hilda. Yes, precisely. [*She wanders about the room, stops at the bookcase and looks at the books.*] What a lot of books you have.

Sol. Yes, I have got together a good many.

Hilda. Do you read them all, too?

Sol. I used to try to. Do you read much?

Hilda. No, never! I have given it up. For it all seems so irrelevant.

Sol. That is just my feeling.

[Hilda *wanders about a little, stops at the small table, opens the portfolio and turns over the contents.*]

Hilda. Are all these drawings yours?

Sol. No, they are drawn by a young man whom I employ to help me.

Hilda. Some one you have taught?

Sol. Oh! yes, no doubt he has learnt something from me, too.

Hilda [*sits down*]. Then I suppose he is very clever. [*Looks at a drawing.*] Isn't he?

Sol. Oh, he might be worse. For my purpose——

Hilda. Oh! yes—I'm sure he is frightfully clever.

Sol. Do you think you can see that in the drawings?

Hilda. Pooh—these scrawlings!

But if he has been learning from you ——

SOL. Oh, so far as that goes—there are plenty of people that have learnt from me, and have come to little enough for all that.

HILDA [*looks at him and shakes her head*]. No, I can't for the life of me understand how you can be so stupid.

SOL. Stupid? Do you think I am so very stupid?

HILDA. Yes, I do indeed. If you are content to go about here teaching all these people——

SOL. [*with a slight start*]. Well, and why not?

HILDA [*rises, half serious, half laughing*]. No indeed, Mr. Solness! What can be the good of that? No one but you should be allowed to build. You should stand quite alone—do it all yourself. Now you know it.

SOL. [*involuntarily*]. Hilda——!

HILDA. Well!

SOL. How in the world did that come into your head?

HILDA. Do you think I am so very far wrong then?

SOL. No, that's not what I mean. But now I'll tell you something.

HILDA. Well?

SOL. I keep on—incessantly—in silence and alone—brooding on that very thought.

HILDA. Yes, that seems to me perfectly natural.

SOL. [*looks somewhat searchingly at her*]. Perhaps you have noticed it already?

HILDA. No, indeed I haven't.

SOL. But just now—when you said you thought I was—off my balance? In one thing, you said——

HILDA. Oh, I was thinking of something quite different.

SOL. What was it?

HILDA. I am not going to tell you.

SOL. [*crosses the room*]. Well, well—as you please. [*Stops at the bow-window.*] Come here, and I will show you something.

HILDA [*approaching.*] What is it?

SOL. Do you see—over there in the garden——?

HILDA. Yes?

SOL. [*points*]. Right about the great quarry——?

HILDA. That new house, you mean?

SOL. The one that is being built, yes. Almost finished.

HILDA. It seems to have a very high tower.

SOL. The scaffolding is still up.

HILDA. Is that your new house?

SOL. Yes.

HILDA. The house you are soon going to move into?

SOL. Yes.

HILDA [*looks at him*]. Are there nurseries in that house, too?

SOL. Three, as there are here.

HILDA. And no child.

SOL. And there never will be one.

HILDA [*with a half-smile*]. Well, isn't it just as I said—?

SOL. That——?

HILDA. That you are a little—a little mad after all.

SOL. Was that what you were thinking of?

HILDA. Yes, of all the empty nurseries I slept in.

SOL. [*lowers his voice*]. We have had children—Aline and I.

HILDA [*looks eagerly at him*]. Have you—?

Sol. Two little boys. They were f the same age.

Hilda. Twins, then.

Sol. Yes, twins. It's eleven or welve years ago now.

Hilda [*cautiously*]. And so both f them——? You have lost both the vins, then?

Sol. [*with quiet emotion*]. We ept them only about three weeks. Or arcely so much. [*Bursts forth*]. Oh, ilda, I can't tell you what a good ing it is for me that you have come! or now at last I have some one I can lk to!

Hilda. Can you not talk to—her, o?

Sol. Not about this. Not as I want talk and must talk. [*Gloomily*] And t about so many other things, either.

Hilda [*in a subdued voice*]. Was at all you meant when you said you eeded me?

Sol. That was mainly what I eant—at all events, yesterday. For -day I am not so sure—[*Breaking f.*] Come here and let us sit down, ilda. Sit there on the sofa—so that u can look into the garden. [Hilda *ats herself in the corner of the sofa.* olness *brings a chair closer.*] Should u like to hear about it?

Hilda. Yes, I shall love to sit and ten to you.

Sol. [*sits down*]. Then I will tell u all about it.

Hilda. Now I can see both the gar- n and you, Mr. Solness. So now, tell ay! Begin!

Sol. [*points towards the bow-win- w*]. Out there on the rising ground where you see the new house——

Hilda. Yes?

Sol. Aline and I lived there in the first years of our married life. There was an old house up there that had belonged to her mother; and we inherited it, and the whole of the great garden with it.

Hilda. Was there a tower on that house, too?

Sol. No, nothing of the kind. From the outside it looked like a great, dark, ugly wooden box; but all the same, it was snug and comfortable enough inside.

Hilda. Then did you pull down the ramshackle old place?

Sol. No, it burnt down.

Hilda. The whole of it?

Sol. Yes.

Hilda. Was that a great misfortune for you?

Sol. That depends on how you look at it. As a builder, the fire was the making of me——

Hilda. Well, but——?

Sol. It was just after the birth of the two little boys——

Hilda. The poor little twins, yes.

Sol. They came healthy and bonny into the world. And they were growing too—you could see the difference from day to day.

Hilda. Little children do grow quickly at first.

Sol. It was the prettiest sight in the world to see Aline lying with the two of them in her arms.—But then came the night of the fire——

Hilda [*excitedly*]. What happened? Do tell me! Was any one burnt?

Sol. No, not that. Every one got safe and sound out of the house——

Hilda. Well, and what then——?

SOL. The fright had shaken Aline terribly. The alarm—the escape—the break-neck hurry—and then the ice-cold night air—for they had to be carried out just as they lay—both she and the little ones.

HILDA. Was it too much for them?

SOL. Oh! no, they stood it well enough. But Aline fell into a fever, and it affected her milk. She would insist on nursing them herself; because it was her duty, she said. And both our little boys, they—[*clenching his hands.*] —they—oh!

HILDA. They did not get over that.

SOL. No, that they did not get over. That was how we lost them.

HILDA. It must have been terribly hard for you.

SOL. Hard enough for me; but ten times harder for Aline. [*Clenching his hands in suppressed fury.*] Oh, that such things should be allowed to happen here in the world! [*Shortly and firmly.*] From the day I lost them, I had no heart for building churches.

HILDA. Did you not like the church-tower in our town?

SOL. I didn't like it. I know how free and happy I felt when that tower was finished.

HILDA. I know that, too.

SOL. And now I shall never—never build anything of that sort again! Neither churches nor church-towers.

HILDA [*nods slowly*]. Nothing but houses for people to live in.

SOL. Homes for human beings, Hilda.

HILDA. But homes with high towers and pinnacles upon them.

SOL. If possible. [*Adopts a lighter tone.*] But, as I said before, that fire was the making of me—as a builder, I mean.

HILDA. Why don't you call yourself an architect, like the others?

SOL. I have not been systematically enough taught for that. Most of what I know I have found out for myself.

HILDA. But you succeeded all the same.

SOL. Yes, thanks to the fire. I laid out almost the whole of the garden in villa lots; and there I was able to build after my own heart. So I came to the front with a rush.

HILDA. [*looks keenly at him*]. You must surely be a very happy man, as matters stand with you.

SOL. [*gloomily*]. Happy? Do you say that, too—like all the rest of them?

HILDA. Yes, I should say you must be. If you could only cease thinking about the two little children——

SOL. [*slowly*]. The two little children—they are not so easy to forget, Hilda.

HILDA [*somewhat uncertainly*]. Do you still feel their loss so much—after all these years?

SOL. [*looks fixedly at her, without replying*]. A happy man you said—

HILDA. Well, now, are you not happy—in other respects?

SOL. [*continues to look at her*]. When I told you all this about the fire —h'm——

HILDA. Well?

SOL. Was there not one special thought that you—that you seized upon?

HILDA. [*reflects in vain.*] No. What thought should that be.

SOL. [*with subdued emphasis*]. It was simply and solely by that fire that

was enabled to build homes for hu-
an beings. Cosy, comfortable, bright
omes, where father and mother and
e whole troop of children can live
safety and gladness, feeling what
happy thing it is to be alive in
e world—and most of all to belong
each other—in great things and in
nall.

HILDA [*ardently*]. Well, and is it
t a great happiness for you to be
le to build such beautiful homes?

SOL. The price, Hilda! The terrible
ice I had to pay for the opportunity!

HILDA. But can you never get over
at?

SOL. No. That I might build homes
r others, I had to forego—to forego
r all time—the home that might have
en my own. I mean a home for a
oop of children—and for father and
other, too.

HILDA [*cautiously*]. But need you
ve done that? For all time, you say?

SOL. [*nods slowly*]. That was the
ice of this happiness that people talk
out. [*Breathes heavily.*] This hap-
ness—h'm—this happiness was not
be bought any cheaper, Hilda.

HILDA [*as before*]. But may it not
me right even yet?

SOL. Never in this world—never.
at is another consequence of the fire
and of Aline's illness afterwards.

HILDA [*looks at him with an in-
finable expression*]. And yet you
ild all these nurseries?

SOL. [*seriously*]. Have you never
ticed, Hilda, how the impossible—
w it seems to beckon and cry aloud
one?

HILDA [*reflecting*]. The impossi-
ble? [*With animation.*] Yes, indeed! Is that how you feel too?

SOL. Yes, I do.

HILDA. There must be—a little of the troll in you too.

SOL. Why of the troll?

HILDA. What would you call it, then?

SOL. [*rises*]. Well, well, perhaps you are right. [*Vehemently*]. But how can I help turning into a troll, when this is how it always goes with me in everything—in everything!

HILDA. How do you mean?

SOL. [*speaking low, with inward emotion*]. Mark what I say to you, Hilda. All that I have succeeded in doing, building, creating—all the beauty, security, cheerful comfort—ay, and magnificence too—[*clenches his hands.*] Oh, is it not terrible even to think of——!

HILDA. What is so terrible?

SOL. That all this I have to make up for, to pay for—not in money, but in human happiness. And not with my own happiness only, but with other people's too. Yes, yes, do you see that, Hilda? That is the price which my position as an artist has cost me—and others. And every single day I have to look on while the price is paid for me anew. Over again, and over again—and over again for ever!

HILDA [*rises and looks steadily at him*]. Now I can see that you are thinking of—of her.

SOL. Yes, mainly of Aline. For Aline—she, too, had her vocation in life, just as much as I had mine. [*His voice quivers.*] But her vocation has had to be stunted, and crushed, and shattered—in order that mine might

force its way to—to a sort of great victory. For you must know that Aline—she, too, had a talent for building.

HILDA. She! For building?

SOL. [*shakes his head*]. Not houses and towers, and spires—not such things as I work away at—

HILDA. Well, but what then?

SOL. [*softly, with emotion*]. For building up the souls of little children, Hilda. For building up children's souls in perfect balance, and in noble and beautiful forms. For enabling them to soar up into erect and full-grown human souls. That was Aline's talent. And there it all lies now—unused and unusable forever—of no earthly service to any one—just like the ruins left by a fire.

HILDA. Yes, but even if this was so——?

SOL. It is so! It is so! I know it!

HILDA. Well, but in any case it is not your fault.

SOL. [*fixes his eyes on her, and nods slowly*]. Ah, that is the great, terrible question. That is the doubt that is gnawing me—night and day.

HILDA. That?

SOL. Yes. Suppose the fault was mine—in a certain sense.

HILDA. Your fault! The fire!

SOL. All of it; the whole thing. And yet, perhaps—I may not have had anything to do with it.

HILDA [*looks at him with a troubled expression*]. Oh, Mr. Solness—if you can talk like that, I am afraid you must be—ill, after all.

SOL. H'm—I don't think I shall ever be of quite sound mind on that point.

RAGNAR BORVIK *cautiously opens the little door in the left-hand corner.* HILDA *comes forward.*

RAG. [*when he sees* HILDA]. Oh, I beg pardon, Mr. Solness—[*He makes a movement to withdraw.*]

SOL. No, no, don't go. Let us get it over.

RAG. Oh, yes—if only we could.

SOL. I hear your father is no better?

RAG. Father is fast growing weaker—and therefore I beg and implore you to write a few kinds words for me on one of the plans! Something for father to read before he—

SOL. [*vehemently*]. I won't hear anything more about those drawings of yours!

RAG. Have you looked at them?

SOL. Yes—I have.

RAG. And they are good for nothing? And *I* am good for nothing, too?

SOL. [*evasively*]. Stay here with me, Ragnar. You shall have everything your own way. And then you can marry Kaia, and live at your ease—and happily, too, who knows? Only don't think of building on your own account.

RAG. Well, well, then I must go home and tell father what you say—I promised I would.—Is this what I am to tell father—before he dies?

SOL. [*with a groan*]. Oh! tell him—tell him what you will, for me. Best to say nothing at all to him. [*With a sudden outburst*]. I cannot do anything else, Ragnar.

RAG. May I have the drawings to take with me?

SOL. Yes, take them—take them by all means! They are lying there on the table.

RAG. [*goes to the table*]. Thanks.

HILDA [*puts her hand on the portfolio*]. No, no; leave them here.

SOL. Why?

HILDA. Because I want to look at em, too.

SOL. But you have been— [*To* RAGNAR]. Well, leave them here, then.

RAG. Very well.

SOL. And go home at once to your ther.

RAG. Yes, I suppose I must.

SOL. [*as if in desperation*]. Ragnar you must not ask me to do what is yond my power. Do you hear, Rag-r? You must not!

RAG. No, no. I beg your pardon—— [*He bows, and goes out by the corner or.* HILDA *goes over and sits down a chair near the mirror.*]

HILDA [*looks angrily at* SOLNESS]. at was a very ugly thing to do.

SOL. Do you think so, too?

HILDA. Yes, it was horribly ugly— d hard and bad and cruel as well.

SOL. Oh, you don't understand my sition.

HILDA. No matter——. I say you ght not to be like that.

SOL. You said yourself, only just w, that no one but *I* ought to be owed to build.

HILDA. *I* may say such things— t you must not.

SOL. I most of all, surely, who have id so dear for my position.

HILDA. Oh! yes—with what you call mestic comfort—and that sort of ng.

SOL. And with my peace of soul into bargain.

HILDA [*rising*]. Peace of soul. [*With ling*]. Yes, yes, you are right in that! Poor Mr. Solness—you fancy that—

SOL. [*with a quiet chuckling laugh*]. Just sit down again, Hilda, and I'll tell you something funny.

HILDA [*sits down; with intent interest*]. Well?

SOL. It sounds such a ludicrous little thing; for, you see, the whole story turns upon nothing but a crack in a chimney.

HILDA. No more than that?

SOL. No, not to begin with.

[*He moves a chair nearer to* HILDA *and sits down.*]

HILDA [*impatiently taps on her knee*]. Well, now for the crack in the chimney!

SOL. I had noticed the split in the flue long, long before the fire. Every time I went up into the attic, I looked to see if it was still there.

HILDA. And it was?

SOL. Yes; for no one else knew about it.

HILDA. And you said nothing?

SOL. Nothing.

HILDA. And did not think of repairing the flue either?

SOL. Oh! yes, I thought about it—but never got any further. Every time I intended to set to work, it seemed just as if a hand held me back. Not today, I thought—tomorrow; and nothing ever came of it.

HILDA. But why did you keep puting it off like that?

SOL. Because I was revolving something in my mind. [*Slowly and in a low voice.*] Through that little black crack in the chimney, I might, perhaps, force my way upwards—as a builder.

HILDA [*looking straight in front of*

her]. That must have been thrilling.

SOL. Almost irresistible—quite irresistible. For at that time it appeared to me a perfectly simple and straightforward matter. I would have had it happen in the winter-time—a little before midday. I was to be out driving Aline in the sleigh. The servants at home would have made huge fires in the stoves.

HILDA. For, of course, it was to be bitterly cold that day?

SOL. Rather biting, yes—and they would want Aline to find it thoroughly snug and warm when she came home.

HILDA. I suppose she is very chilly by nature?

SOL. She is. And as we drove home, we were to see the smoke.

HILDA. Only the smoke?

SOL. The smoke first. But when we came up to the garden gate, the whole of the old timber-box was to be a rolling mass of flames.—That is how I wanted it to be, you see.

HILDA. Oh, why, could it not have happened so!

SOL. You may well say that, Hilda.

HILDA. Well, but now listen, Mr. Solness. Are you perfectly certain that the fire was caused by that little crack in the chimney?

SOL. No, on the contrary—I am perfectly certain that the crack in the chimney had nothing whatever to do with the fire.

HILDA. What?

SOL. It has been clearly ascertained that the fire broke out in a clothes-cupboard—in a totally different part of the house.

HILDA. Then what is all this nonsense you are talking about the crack in the chimney?

SOL. May I go on talking to you a little, Hilda?

HILDA. Yes, if you'll only talk sensibly——

SOL. I will try. [*He moves his chair nearer.*]

HILDA. Out with it, then, Mr. Solness.

SOL. [*confidentially*]. Don't you agree with me, Hilda, that there exist specially chosen people who have been endowed with the power and faculty of desiring a thing, craving for a thing, willing a thing—so persistently and so—so inexorably—that at last it has to happen? Don't you believe that?

HILDA [*with an indefinable expression in her eyes*]. If that is so, we shall see, one of these days, whether *I* am one of the chosen.

SOL. It is not one's self alone that can do such great things. Oh, no—the helpers and the servers—they must do their part, too, if it is to be of any good. But they never come of themselves. One has to call upon them very persistently—inwardly, you understand.

HILDA. What are these helpers and servers?

SOL. Oh, we can talk about that some other time. For the present, let us keep to this business of the fire.

HILDA. Don't you think that fire would have happened all the same—even without your wishing for it.

SOL. If the house had been old Knut Brovik's, it would never have burnt down so conveniently for him. I am sure of that; for he does not know how to call for the helpers—no, nor for the servers, either. [*Rises in unrest*]. S

ou see, Hilda—it is my fault, after all, hat the lives of the two little boys had o be sacrificed. And do you think it is ot my fault, too, that Aline has never een the woman she should and might ave been—and that she most longed to e?

HILDA. Yes, but if it is all the work f those helpers and servers——?

SOL. Who called for the helpers and ervers? It was I! And they came and beyed my will. [*In increasing excite-ient.*] That is what people call having he luck on your side; but I must tell ou what this sort of luck feels like! t feels like a great raw place here on ıy breast. And the helpers and servers eep on flaying pieces of skin off other eople in order to close my sore!—ut still the sore is not healed—never, ever! Oh, if you knew how it can ometimes gnaw and burn.

HILDA [*looks attentively at him.*] ou are ill, Mr. Solness. Very ill, I lmost think.

SOL. Say mad; for that is what ou mean.

HILDA. No, I don't think there is uch amiss with your intellect.

SOL. With what then? Out with it!

HILDA. I wonder whether you were ot sent into the world with a sickly onscience.

SOL. A sickly conscience? What eviltry is that?

HILDA. I mean that your conscience feeble—too delicately built, as it ere—hasn't strength to take a grip of ings—to lift and bear what is heavy.

SOL. [*growls*]. H'm. May I ask, en, what sort of conscience one ought have?

HILDA. I should like your conscience to be—to be thoroughly robust.

SOL. Indeed? Robust, eh? Is your own conscience robust, may I ask?

HILDA. Yes, I think it is. I have never noticed that it wasn't.

SOL. It has not been put very severely to the test, I should think.

HILDA [*with a quivering of the lips*]. Oh, it was no such simple matter to leave father—I am so awfully fond of him.

SOL. Dear me! for a month or two——

HILDA. I think I shall never go home again.

SOL. Never? Then why did you leave him?

HILDA [*half-seriously, half banteringly*]. Have you forgotten that the ten years are up?

SOL. Oh, nonsense. Was anything wrong at home? Eh?

HILDA [*quite seriously*]. It was the impulse within me that urged and goaded me to come—and lured and drew me on, as well.

SOL. [*eagerly*]. There we have it! There we have it, Hilda! There is a troll in you too, as in me. For it's the troll in one, you see—it is that that calls to the powers outside us. And then you must give in—whether you will or not.

HILDA. I almost think you are right, Mr. Solness.

SOL. [*walks about the room*]. Oh, there are devils innumerable abroad in the world. Hilda, that one never sees!

HILDA. Devils, too?

SOL. [*stops*]. Good devils and bad devils; light-haired devils and black-haired devils. If only you could always

tell whether it is the light or dark ones that have got hold of you. [*Paces about*]. Ho-ho! Then it would be simple enough.

HILDA [*follows him with her eyes*]. Or if one had a really vigorous, radiantly healthy conscience—so that one dared to do what one would.

SOL. [*stops beside the console table*]. I believe, now, that most people are just as puny creatures as I am in that respect.

HILDA. I shouldn't wonder.

SOL. [*leaning against the table*]. In the sagas—— Have you read any of the old sagas?

HILDA. Oh, yes! When I used to read books, I——

SOL. In the sagas you read about vikings, who sailed to foreign lands, and plundered and burned and killed men——

HILDA. And carried off women——

SOL. —and kept them in captivity—

HILDA. took them home in their ships——

SOL. ——and behaved to them like —like the very worst of trolls.

HILDA [*looks straight before her, with a half-veiled look*]. I think that must have been thrilling.

SOL. [*with a short, deep laugh*]. To carry off women?

HILDA. To be carried off.

SOL. [*looks at her a moment*]. Oh, indeed.

HILDA [*as if breaking the thread of the conversation*]. But what made you speak of these vikings, Mr. Solness?

SOL. Why, those fellows must have had robust consciences, if you like! When they got home again, they could eat and drink, and be as happy as children. And the women, too! They often would not leave them on any account. Can you understand that, Hilda?

HILDA. Those women I can understand exceedingly well.

SOL. Oho! Perhaps you could do the same yourself?

HILDA. Why not?

SOL. Live—of your own free will—with a ruffian like that?

HILDA. If it was a ruffian I had come to love——

SOL. Could you come to love a man like that?

HILDA. Good heavens, you know very well one can't choose when one is going to love.

SOL. [*looks meditatively at her*]. Oh no, I suppose it is the troll within one that's responsible for that.

HILDA [*half-laughing*]. And all these blessed devils, that you know so well—both the light-haired and the dark-haired ones.

SOL. [*quietly and warmly*]. Then I hope with all my heart that the devils will choose carefully for you, Hilda.

HILDA. For me they have chosen already—once and for all.

SOL. [*looks earnestly at her*]. Hilda —you are like a wild bird of the woods.

HILDA. Far from it. I don't hide myself away under the bushes.

SOL. No, no. There is rather something of the bird of prey in you.

HILDA. That is nearer it—perhaps. [*Very earnestly.*] And why not a bird of prey? Why should not *I* go a-hunting—I, as well as the rest. Carry off the prey I want—if only I can get my claws into it, and do with it as I will.

SOL. Hilda—do you know what you are?

HILDA. Yes, I suppose I am a range sort of bird.

SOL. No. You are like a dawning ay. When I look at you—I seem to e looking towards the sunrise.

HILDA. Tell me, Mr. Solness—are ou certain that you have never called e to you? Inwardly, you know?

SOL. [*softly and slowly*]. I almost ink I must have.

HILDA. What did you want with me?

SOL. You are the younger genera- on, Hilda.

HILDA [*smiles*]. That younger gene- ation that you are so afraid of.

SOL. [*nods slowly*]. And which, in y heart, I yearn towards so deeply.

[HILDA *rises, goes to the little table, nd fetches* RAGNAR BROVIK'S *port- olio.*]

HILDA [*holds out the portfolio to m*]. We were talking of these draw- gs——

SOL. [*shortly, waving them away*]. ut those things away! I have seen ough of them.

HILDA. Yes, but you have to write ur approval on them.

SOL. Write my approval on them? ever!

HILDA. But the poor old man is ly- g at death's door! Can't you give m and his son this pleasure before ey are parted? And perhaps he might t the commission to carry them out, o.

SOL. Yes, that is just what he would t. He has made sure of that—has my ie gentleman!

HILDA. Then, good heavens—if that so—can't you tell the least bit of a for once in a way?

SOL. A lie? [*Raging.*] Hilda—take ose devil's drawings out of my sight!

HILDA [*draws the portfolio a little nearer to herself*]. Well, well, well—don't bite me.— You talk of trolls—but I think you go on like a troll yourself. [*Looks around*]. Where do you keep your pen and ink?

SOL. There is nothing of the sort in here.

HILDA [*goes towards the door*]. But in the office where that young lady is——

SOL. Stay where you are, Hilda!—I ought to tell a lie, you say. Oh, yes, for the sake of his old father, I might well do that—for in my time I have crushed him, trodden him under foot—

HILDA. Him, too?

SOL. I needed room for myself. But this Ragnar—he must on no account be allowed to come to the front.

HILDA. Poor fellow, there is surely no fear of that. If he has nothing in him——

SOL. [*comes closer, looks at her, and whispers.*] If Ragnar Brovik gets his chance, he will strike me to the earth. Crush me—as I crushed his father.

HILDA. Crush you? Has he the ability for that?

SOL. Yes, you may depend upon it he has the ability! He is the younger generation that stands ready to knock at my door—to make an end of Halvard Solness.

HILDA [*looks at him with quiet reproach*]. And yet you would bar him out. Fie, Mr. Solness!

SOL. The fight I have been fighting has cost heart's blood enough.—And I am afraid, too, that the helpers and servers will not obey me any longer.

HILDA. Then you must go ahead without them. There is nothing else for it.

SOL. It is hopeless, Hilda. The luck is bound to turn. A little sooner or a little later. Retribution is inexorable.

HILDA [*in distress, putting her hands over her ears*]. Don't talk like that! Do you want to kill me? To take from me what is more than my life?

SOL. And what is that?

HILDA. The longing to see you great. To see you with a wreath in your hand, high, high up upon a church-tower. [*Calm again.*] Come, out with your pencil now. You must have a pencil about you?

SOL. [*takes out his pocket-book*]. I have one here.

HILDA [*lays the portfolio on the sofa-table*]. Very well. Now let us two sit down here, Mr. Solness. [SOLNESS *seats himself at the table.* HILDA *stands behind him, leaning over the back of the chair.*] And now we will write on the drawings. We must write very, very nicely and cordially—for this horrid Ruar—or whatever his name is.

SOL. [*writes a few words, turns his head and looks at her*]. Tell me one thing, Hilda.

HILDA. Yes!

SOL. If you have been waiting for me all these ten years——

HILDA. What then?

SOL. Why have you never written to me? Then I could have answered you.

HILDA [*hastily*]. No, no, no! That was just what I did not want.

SOL. Why not?

HILDA. I was afraid the whole thing might fall to pieces.—But we were going to write on the drawings, Mr. Solness.

SOL. So we were.

HILDA [*bends forward and looks ove his shoulder while he writes*]. Min now, kindly and cordially! Oh, how hate—how I hate this Ruald——

SOL. [*writing*]. Have you never rea ly cared for any one, Hilda?

HILDA [*harshly*]. What do you say

SOL. Have you never really care for any one?

HILDA. For any one else, I suppos you mean?

SOL. [*looks up at her*]. For any on else, yes. Have you never? In all thes ten years? Never?

HILDA. Oh! yes, now and then. Whe I was perfectly furious with you fo not coming.

SOL. Then you did take an interes in other people, too?

HILDA. A little bit—for a week o so. Good heavens, Mr. Solness, yo surely know how such things com about.

SOL. Hilda—what is it you hav come for?

HILDA. Don't waste time talking. Th poor old man might go and die in th meantime.

SOL. Answer me, Hilda. What d you want of me?

HILDA. I want my kingdom.

SOL. H'm——

[*He gives a rapid glance towards th door on the left, and then goes on wri ing on the drawings. At the same mo ment* MRS. SOLNESS *enters; she ha some packages in her hand.*]

MRS. S. Here are a few things have got for you, Miss Wangel. Th large parcels will be sent later on.

HILDA. Oh, how very, very kind o you!

MRS. S. Only my simple duty. Noth-ng more than that.

SOL. [*reading over what he has writ-en*]. Aline!

MRS. S. Yes?

SOL. Did you notice whether the—he bookkeeper was out there?

MRS. S. Yes, of course, she was out here.

SOL. [*puts the drawings in the port-olio*]. H'm——

MRS. S. She was standing at the lesk, as she always is—when *I* go hrough the room.

SOL. [*rises*]. Then I'll give this to er, and tell her that——

HILDA [*takes the portfolio from im*]. Oh, no, let me have the plea-ure of doing that! [*Goes to the door, ut turns.*] What is her name?

SOL. Her name is Miss Fosli.

HILDA. Pooh, that sounds too cold! Her Christian name, I mean?

SOL. Kaia—I believe.

HILDA [*opens the door and calls out*]. Kaia, come in here! Make haste! Mr. olness wants to speak to you.

KAIA FOSLI *appears at the door.*

KAIA [*looking at him in alarm*]. Here am——?

HILDA [*handing her the portfolio*]. ee here, Kaia! You can take this ome; Mr. Solness has written on them ow.

KALA. Oh, at last!

SOL. Give them to the old man as oon as you can.

KAIA. I will go straight home with em.

SOL. Yes, do. Now Ragnar will have chance of building for himself.

KAIA. Oh, may he come and thank ou for all——?

SOL. [*harshly*]. I won't have any thanks! Tell him that from me.

KAIA. Yes, I will—

SOL. And tell him at the same time that henceforward I do not require his services—nor yours either.

KAIA [*softly and quiveringly*]. Nor mine either?

SOL. You will have other things to think of now, and to attend to; and that is a very good thing for you. Well, go home with the drawings now, Miss Fosli. At once! Do you hear?

KAIA [*as before*]. Yes, Mr. Solness. [*She goes out.*]

MRS. S. Heavens! what deceitful eyes she has.

SOL. She? That poor little creature?

MRS. S. Oh—I can see what I can see, Halvard.—Are you really dismissing them?

SOL. Yes.

MRS. S. Her as well?

SOL. Was not that what you wished?

MRS. S. But how can you get on without her——? Oh, well, no doubt you have some one else in reserve, Halvard.

HILDA [*playfully*]. Well, I for one am not the person to stand at that desk.

SOL. Never mind, never mind—it will be all right, Aline. Now all you have to do is to think about moving into our new home—as quickly as you can. This evening we will hang up the wreath—[*Turns to* HILDA]—right on the very pinnacle of the tower. What do you say to that, Miss Hilda?

HILDA [*looks at him with sparkling eyes*]. It will be splendid to see you so high up once more.

SOL. Me!

MRS. S. For heaven's sake, Miss Wangel, don't imagine such a thing! My husband!—when he always gets so dizzy!

HILDA. He gets dizzy! No, I know quite well he does not!

MRS. S. Oh! yes, indeed he does.

HILDA. But I have seen him with my own eyes right up at the top of a high church-tower!

MRS S. Yes, I hear people talk of that; but it is utterly impossible——

SOL. [*vehemently*]. Impossible—impossible, yes! But there I stood all the same!

MRS. S. Oh, how can you say so, Halvard? Why, you can't even bear to go out on the second-story balcony here. You have always been like that.

SOL. You may perhaps see something different this evening.

MRS. S. [*in alarm*]. No, no, no! Please God I shall never see that. I will write at once to the doctor—and I am sure he won't let you do it.

SOL. Why, Aline——!

MRS. S. Oh, you know you're ill, Halvard. This proves it! Oh! God—Oh! God! [*She goes hastily out to the right*].

HILDA [*looks intently at him*]. Is it so, or is it not?

SOL. That I turn dizzy?

HILDA. That my master builder dare not—cannot—climb as high as he builds?

SOL. Is that the way you look at it?

HILDA. Yes.

SOL. I believe there is scarcely a corner of me that is safe from you.

HILDA [*looks toward the bow-window*]. Up there, then. Right up there——

SOL. [*approaches her*]. You might have the topmost room in the tower, Hilda—there you might live like a princess.

HILDA [*indefinably, between earnest and jest*]. Yes, that is what you promised me.

SOL. Did I really.

HILDA. Fie, Mr. Solness! You said I should be a princess, and that you would give me a kingdom. And then you went and—Well!

SOL. [*cautiously*]. Are you quite certain that this is not a dream—a fancy, that has fixed itself in your mind?

HILDA [*sharply*]. Do you mean that you did not do it?

SOL. I scarcely know myself. [*More softly.*] But now I know so much for certain, that I——

HILDA. That you——? Say it at once!

SOL. ——that I ought to have done it.

HILDA [*exclaims with animation*]. Don't tell me you can ever be dizzy!

SOL. This evening, then, we will hang up the wreath—Princess Hilda.

HILDA [*with a bitter curve of the lips*]. Over your new home, yes.

SOL. Over the house which will never be a home for me.

[*He goes out through the garden door.*]

HILDA [*looks straight in front of her with a far-away expression, and whispers to herself. The only words audible are*]—frightfully thrilling——

ACT III

SCENE—*The large, broad verandah of* SOLNESS'S *dwelling house. Part of*

the house, with outer door leading to the verandah, is seen to the left. A railing along the verandah to the right. At the back, from the end of the verandah, a flight of steps leads down to the garden below. Tall old trees in the garden spread their branches over the verandah and towards the house. Far to the right, in among the trees, a glimpse is caught of the lower part of the new villa, with scaffolding round so much as is seen of the tower. In the background the garden is bounded by an old wooden fence. Outside the fence, a street with low, tumble-down cottages. Evening sky with sun-lit clouds.

On the verandah, a garden bench stands along the wall of the house, and in front of the bench a long table. On the other side of the table, an arm-chair and some stools. All the furniture is of wicker-work.

MRS. SOLNESS, *wrapped in a large white crepe shawl, sits resting in the arm-chair and gazes over to the right. Shortly after,* HILDA WANGEL *comes up the flight of steps from the garden. She is dressed as in the last act, and wears her hat. She has in her bodice a little nosegay of small common flowers.*

MRS. S. [*turning her head a little*]. Have you been round the garden, Miss Wangel?

HILDA. Yes, I have been taking a look at it.

MRS. S. And found some flowers too, I see.

HILDA. Yes, indeed! There are such heaps of them in among the bushes.

MRS. S. Are there really? Still! You see I scarcely ever go there

HILDA [*closer*]. What! Don't you take a run down into the garden every day, then?

MRS. S. [*with a faint smile*]. I don't "run" anywhere, nowadays.

HILDA. Well, but do you not go down now and then to look at all the lovely things there?

MRS. S. It has all become so strange to me. I am almost afraid to see it again!

HILDA. Your own garden!

MRS. S. I don't feel that it is mine any longer.

HILDA. What do you mean——?

MRS. S. No, no, it is not—not as it was in my mother's and father's time. They have taken away so much—so much of the garden, Miss Wangel. Fancy—they have parcelled it out—and built houses for strangers—people that I don't know. And they can sit and look in upon me from their windows.

HILDA [*with a bright expression*]. Mrs. Solness.

MRS. S. Yes.

HILDA. May I stay here with you a little?

MRS. S. Yes, by all means, if you care to.

[HILDA *moves a stool closer to the arm-chair and sits down.*]

HILDA. Ah—here one can sit and sun oneself like a cat.

MRS. S. [*lays her hand softly on* HILDA'S *neck*]. It is nice of you to be willing to sit with me. I thought you wanted to go in to my husband.

HILDA. What should I want with him?

MRS. S. To help him, I thought.

HILDA. No, thank you. And besides, he is not in. He is over there with the

workmen. But he looked so fierce that I did not care to talk to him.

MRS. S. He is so kind and gentle in reality.

HILDA. He.

MRS. S. You do not really know him yet, Miss Wangel.

HILDA [*looks affectionately at her*]. Are you pleased at the thought of moving over to the new house?

MRS. S. I ought to be pleased; for it is what Halvard wants——

HILDA. Oh, not just on that account, surely.

MRS. S. Yes, yes, Miss Wangel; for it is only my duty to submit myself to him. But very often it is dreadfully difficult to force one's mind to obedience.

HILDA. Yes, that must be difficult indeed.

MRS. S. I can tell you it is—when one has so many faults as I have—

HILDA. When one has gone through so much trouble as you have—

MRS. S. How do you know about that?

HILDA. Your husband told me.

MRS. S. To me he very seldom mentions these things.—Yes, I can tell you I have gone through more than enough trouble in my life, Miss Wangel.

HILDA [*looks sympathetically at her and nods slowly*]. Poor Mrs. Solness. First of all there was the fire——

MRS. S. [*with a sigh*]. Yes, everything that was mine was burnt.

HILDA. And then came what was worse.

MRS. S. [*looking inquiringly at her*]. Worse?

HILDA. The worst of all.

MRS. S. What do you mean?

HILDA [*softly*]. You lost the two little boys.

MRS. S. Oh! yes, the boys. But, you see, that was a thing apart. That was a dispensation of Providence; and in such things one can only bow in submission—yes, and be thankful, too.

HILDA. Then you are so?

MRS. S. Not always, I am sorry to say. I know well enough that it is my duty—but all the same I cannot.

HILDA. No, no, I think that is only natural.

MRS. S. And often and often I have to remind myself that it was a righteous punishment for me——

HILDA. Why?

MRS. S. Because I had not fortitude enough in misfortune.

HILDA. But I don't see that——

MRS. S. Oh, no, no, Miss Wangel—do not talk to me any more about the two little boys. We ought to feel nothing but joy in thinking of them; for they are so happy—so happy now. No, it is the small losses of life that cut one to the heart—the loss of all that other people look upon as almost nothing.

HILDA [*lays her arms on* MRS. SOLNESS'S *knees, and looks up at her affectionately*]. Dear Mrs. Solness—tell me what things you mean!

MRS. S. As I say, only little things. All the old portraits were burnt on the walls. And all the old silk dresses were burnt, that had belonged to the family for generations and generations. And all mother's and grandmother's lace—that was burnt, too. And only think—the jewels, too! [*sadly.*] And then all the dolls.

HILDA. The dolls?

MRS. S. [*choking with tears*]. I had nine lovely dolls.

HILDA. And they were burnt, too?

MRS. S. All of them. Oh, it was hard—so hard for me.

HILDA. Had you put by all these dolls, then? Ever since you were little?

MRS. S. I had not put them by. The dolls and I had gone on living together.

HILDA. After you were grown up?

MRS S. Yes, long after that.

HILDA. After you were married, too?

MRS. S. Oh, yes, indeed. So long as he did not see it——. But they were all burnt up, poor things. No one thought of saving them. Oh, it is so miserable to think of. You mustn't laugh at me, Miss Wangel.

HILDA. I am not laughing in the least.

MRS. S. For you see, in a certain sense, there was life in them, too. I carried them under my heart—like little unborn children.

DR. HERDAL, *with his hat in his hand, comes out through the door, and observes* MRS. SOLNESS *and* HILDA.

DR. H. Well, Mrs. Solness, so you are sitting out here catching cold?

MRS. S. I find it so pleasant and warm here to-day.

DR. H. Yes, yes. But is there anything going on here? I got a note from you.

MRS. S. [*rises*]. Yes, there is something I must talk to you about.

DR. H. Very well; then perhaps we had better go in. [*To* HILDA.] Still in your mountaineering dress, Miss Wangel?

HILDA [*gaily, rising*]. Yes—in full uniform! But to-day I am not going climbing and breaking my neck. We two will stop quietly below and look on, doctor?

DR. H. What are we to look on at?

MRS. S. [*softly, in alarm, to* HILDA]. Hush, hush—for God's sake! He is coming. Try to get that idea out of his head. And let us be friends, Miss Wangel. Don't you think we can?

HILDA [*throws her arms impetuously round* MRS. SOLNESS'S *neck*]. Oh, if we only could!

MRS. S. [*gently disengages herself*]. There, there, there! There he comes, doctor. Let me have a word with you.

DR. H. Is it about him?

MRS. S. Yes, to be sure it's about him. Do come in.

[*She and the doctor enter the house. Next moment* SOLNESS *comes up from the garden by the flight of steps. A serious look comes over* HILDA'S *face.*]

SOL. [*glances at the house-door, which is closed cautiously from within*]. Have you noticed, Hilda, that as soon as I come, she goes?

HILDA. I have noticed that as soon as you come, you make her go.

SOL. Perhaps so. But I cannot help it. [*Looks observantly at her.*] Are you cold, Hilda? I think you look cold.

HILDA. I have just come up out of a tomb.

SOL. What do you mean by that?

HILDA. That I have got chilled through and through, Mr. Solness.

SOL. [*slowly*]. I believe I understand——

HILDA. What brings you up here just now?

SOL. I caught sight of you from over there.

HILDA. But then you must have seen her, too?

SOL. I knew she would go at once if I came.

HILDA. Is it very painful for you that she should avoid you in this way?

SOL. In one sense, it's a relief as well.

HILDA. Not to have her before your eyes?

SOL. Yes.

HILDA. Not to be always seeing how heavily the loss of the little boys weighs upon her?

SOL. Yes, chiefly that.

[HILDA *drifts across the verandah with her hands behind her back, stops at the railing and looks out over the garden.*]

SOL. [*After a short pause*]. Did you have a long talk with her?

[HILDA *stands motionless and does not answer.*]

SOL. Had you a long talk, I asked?

[HILDA *is silent as before.*]

SOL. What was she talking about, Hilda?

[HILDA *continues silent.*]

SOL. Poor Aline! I suppose it was about the little boys.

HILDA [*a nervous shudder runs through her; then she nods hurriedly once or twice*].

SOL. She will never get over it—never in this world. [*Approaches her.*] Now you are standing there again like a statue; just as you stood last night.

HILDA [*turns and looks at him, with great serious eyes*]. I am going away.

SOL. [*sharply*]. Going away!

HILDA. Yes.

SOL. But I won't allow you to!

HILDA. What am I to do here now!

SOL. Simply to be here, Hilda!

HILDA [*measures him with a look*]. Oh, thank you. You know it wouldn't end there.

SOL. [*heedlessly*]. So much the better!

HILDA [*vehemently*]. I cannot do any harm to one whom I know! I can't take away anything that belongs to her.

SOL. Who wants you to do that?

HILDA [*continuing*]. A stranger, yes! for that is quite a different thing! A person I have never set eyes on. But one that I have come into close contact with——! Oh, no! Oh, no! Ugh!

SOL. Yes, but I never proposed you should.

HILDA. Oh, Mr. Solness, you know quite well what the end of it would be. And that is why I am going away.

SOL. And what is to become of me when you are gone? What shall I have to live for then?—After that?

HILDA [*with the indefinable look in her eyes*]. It is surely not so hard for you. You have your duties to her. Live for those duties.

SOL. Too late. These powers—these—these—

HILDA. ——devils——

SOL. Yes, these devils! And the troll within me as well—they have drawn all the life-blood out of her. [*Laughs in desperation.*] They did it for my happiness! Yes, yes! [*Sadly.*] And now she is dead—for my sake. And I am chained alive to a dead woman. [*In wild anguish.*] I—I who cannot live without joy in life!

[HILDA *moves round the table and seats herself on the bench, with her*

elbows on the table,and her head supported by her hands.]

HILDA [*sits and looks at him awhile*]. What will you build next?

SOL. [*shakes his head*]. I don't believe I shall build much more.

HILDA. Not those cosy, happy homes for mother and father, and for the troop of children?

SOL. I wonder whether there will be any use for such homes in the coming time.

HILDA. Poor Mr. Solness! And you have gone all these ten years—and staked your whole life—on that alone.

SOL. Yes, you may well say so, Hilda.

HILDA [*with an outburst*]. Oh! it all seems to me so foolish—so foolish!

SOL. All what?

HILDA. Not to be able to grasp at your own happiness—at your own life! Merely because some one you know happens to stand in the way!

SOL. One whom you have no right to set aside.

HILDA. I wonder whether one really has not the right! And yet, and yet—. Oh, if one could only sleep the whole thing away!

[*She lays her arms flat on the table, rests the left side of her head on her hands, and shuts her eyes.*]

SOL. [*turns the arm-chair and sits down at the table*]. Had you a cosy, happy home—up there with your father, Hilda?

HILDA [*without stirring, answers as if half asleep*]. I had only a cage.

SOL. And you are determined not to go back to it?

HILDA [*as before*]. The wild bird never wants to go into the cage.

SOL. Rather range through the free air—

HILDA [*still as before*]. The bird of prey loves to range——

SOL. [*lets his eyes rest on her*]. If only one had the Viking-spirit in life—

HILDA [*in her usual voice; opens her eyes but does not move*]. And the other thing? Say what that was!

SOL. A robust conscience.

[HILDA *sits erect on the bench, with animation. Her eyes have once more the sparkling expression of gladness.*]

HILDA [*nods to him*]. I know what you are going to build next!

SOL. Then you know more than I do, Hilda.

HILDA. Yes, builders are such stupid people.

SOL. What is it to be then?

HILDA [*nods again*]. The castle.

SOL. What castle?

HILDA. My castle, of course.

SOL. Do you want a castle now?

HILDA. Don't you owe me a kingdom, I should like to know?

SOL. You say I do.

HILDA. Well—you admit you owe me this kingdom. And you can't have a kingdom without a royal castle, I should think!

SOL. [*more and more animated*]. Yes, they usually go together.

HILDA. Good! Then build it for me! This moment!

SOL. [*laughing*]. Must you have that on the instant, too?

HILDA. Yes, to be sure! For the ten years are up now, and I am not going to wait any longer. So—out with the castle, Mr. Solness!

SOL. It's no light matter to owe you anything, Hilda.

HILDA. You should have thought of that before. It is too late now. So—[*tapping the table*]—the castle on the table! It is my castle! I will have it at once!

SOL. [*more seriously, leans over towards her, with his arms on the table*]. What sort of castle have you imagined, Hilda?

[*Her expression becomes more and more veiled. She seems gazing inwards at herself.*]

HILDA [*slowly*]. My castle shall stand on a height—on a very great height—with a clear outlook on all sides, so that I can see far—far around.

SOL. And no doubt it is to have a high tower!

HILDA. A tremendously high tower. And at the very top of the tower there shall be a balcony. And I will stand out upon it——

SOL. [*involuntarily clutches at his forehead*]. How can you like to stand at such a dizzy height——?

HILDA. Yes, I will, right up there will I stand and look down on the other people—on those that are building churches, and homes for mother and father and the troop of children. And you may come up and look on at it, too.

SOL. [*in a low tone*]. Is the builder to be allowed to come up beside the princess?

HILDA. If the builder will.

SOL. [*more softly*]. Then I think the builder will come.

HILDA [*nods*]. The builder—he will come.

SOL. But he will never be able to build any more. Poor builder!

HILDA [*animated*]. Oh! yes, he will! We two will set to work together. And then we will build the loveliest—the very loveliest—thing in all the world.

SOL. [*intently*]. Hilda—tell me what that is!

HILDA [*looks smilingly at him, shakes her head a little, pouts, and speaks as if to a child*]. Builders—they are such very—very stupid people.

SOL. Yes, no doubt they are stupid. But now tell me what it is—the loveliest thing in the world—that we two are to build together?

HILDA [*is silent a little while, then says with an indefinable expression in her eyes*]. Castles in the air.

SOL. Castles in the air?

HILDA [*nods*]. Castles in the air, yes! Do you know what sort of thing a castle in the air is?

SOL. It is the loveliest thing in the world, you say.

HILDA [*rises with vehemence, and makes a gesture of repulsion with her hand*]. Yes, to be sure it is! Castles in the air—they are so easy to take refuge in. And so easy to build, too—[*looks scornfully at him*]—especially for the builders who have a—a dizzy conscience.

SOL. [*rises*]. After this day we two will build together, Hilda.

HILDA [*with a half-dubious smile*]. A real castle in the air?

SOL. Yes, one with a firm foundation under it.

[RAGNAR BROVIK *comes out from the house. He is carrying a large, green wreath with flowers and silk ribbons.*]

HILDA [*with an outburst of pleasure*]. The wreath! Oh, that will be glorious!

SOL. [*in surprise*]. Have you brought

he wreath, Ragnar?

RAG. I promised the foreman I would.

SOL. [*relieved*]. Ah, then I suppose your father is better?

RAG. No.

SOL. Was he not cheered by what I wrote?

RAG. It came too late.

SOL. Too late!

RAG. When she came with it he was unconscious. He had had a stroke.

SOL. Why, then, you must go home to him! You must attend to your father!

RAG. He does not need me any more.

SOL. But surely you ought to be with him.

RAG. She is sitting by his bed.

SOL. [*rather uncertainly*]. Kaia?

RAG. [*looking rather darkly at him*]. Yes— Kaia.

SOL. Go home, Ragnar—both to him and to her. Give me the wreath.

RAG. [*suppressing a mocking smile*]. You don't mean that you yourself——?

SOL. I will take it down to them myself. [*Takes the wreath from him.*] And now you go home; we don't require you to-day.

RAG. I know you do not require me any more; but to-day I shall remain.

SOL. Well, remain then, since you are bent upon it.

HILDA [*at the railing*]. Mr. Solness, I will stand here and look on at you.

SOL. At me!

HILDA. It will be fearfully thrilling.

SOL. [*in a low tone*]. We will talk about that presently, Hilda.

[*He goes down the flight of steps with the wreath, and away through the garden.*]

HILDA [*looks after him, then turns to* RAGNAR]. I think you might at least have thanked him.

RAG. Thanked him? Ought I to have thanked him?

HILDA. Yes, of course you ought!

RAG. I think it is rather you I ought to thank.

HILDA. How can you say such a thing?

RAG. [*without answering her*]. But I advise you to take care, Miss Wangel! For you don't know him rightly yet.

HILDA [*ardently*]. Oh, no one knows him as I do!

RAG. [*laughs in exasperation*]. Thank him, when he has held me down year after year! When he made father disbelieve in me—made me disbelieve in myself! And all merely that he might ——!

HILDA [*as if divining something*]. That he might——? Tell me at once!

RAG. That he might keep her with him.

HILDA [*with a start towards him*]. The girl at the desk.

RAG. Yes.

HILDA [*clenching her hands*]. That is not true! You are telling falsehoods about him!

RAG. I would not believe it either until to-day—when she said so herself.

HILDA [*as if beside herself*]. What did she say? I will know! At once! At once!

RAG. She said that he had taken possession of her mind—her whole mind—centred all her thoughts upon himself alone. She says that she can never leave

him—that she will remain here, where he is——

HILDA [*with flashing eyes*]. She will not be allowed to!

RAG. [*as if feeling his way*]. Who will not allow her?

HILDA [*rapidly*]. He will not either!

RAG. Oh, no—I understand the whole thing now. After this she would merely be—in the way.

HILDA. You understand nothing—since you can talk like that. No, *I* will tell you why he kept hold of her.

RAG. Well then, why?

HILDA. In order to keep hold of you.

RAG. Has he told you so?

HILDA. No, but it is so. It must be so! [*Wildly.*] I will—I will have it so!

RAG. And at the very moment when you came—he let her go.

HILDA. It was you—you that he let go. What do you suppose he cares about strange women like her?

RAG. [*reflects*]. Is it possible that all this time he has been afraid of me?

HILDA. He afraid! I would not be so conceited if I were you.

RAG. Oh, he must have seen long ago that I had something in me, too. Besides—cowardly—that is just what he is, you see.

HILDA. He! Oh! yes, I am likely to believe that!

RAG. In a certain sense he is cowardly—he, the great master builder. He is not afraid of robbing others of their life's happiness—as he has done both for my father and for me. But when it comes to climbing up a paltry bit of scaffolding—he will do anything rather than that.

HILDA. Oh, you should just have seen him high, high up—at the dizzy height where I once saw him.

RAG. Did you see that?

HILDA. Yes, indeed I did. How free and great he looked as he stood and fastened the wreath to the church vane!

RAG. I know that he ventured that, once in his life—one solitary time. It is a legend among us younger men. But no power on earth would induce him to do it again.

HILDA. To-day he will do it again!

RAG. [*scornfully*]. Yes, I daresay!

HILDA. We shall see it!

RAG. That neither you nor I will see.

HILDA [*with uncontrollable vehemence*]. I will see it! I will and must see it!

RAG. But he will not do it. He simply dare not do it. For you see he cannot get over this infirmity—master builder though he be.

MRS. SOLNESS *comes from the house on to the verandah.*

MRS. S. [*looks around*]. Is he not here? Where has he gone to?

RAG. Mr. Solness is down with the men.

HILDA. He took the wreath with him.

MRS. S. [*terrified*]. Took the wreath with him! Oh, God! oh, God! Brovik—you must go down to him! Get him to come back here!

RAG. Shall I say you want to speak to him, Mrs. Solness?

MRS. S. Oh! yes, do!—No, no—don't say that *I* want anything! You can say that somebody is here, and he must come at once.

RAG. Good. I will do so, Mrs. Solness.

[*He goes down the flight of steps and way through the garden.*]

MRS. S. Oh, Miss Wangel, you can't think how anxious I feel about him.

HILDA. Is there anything in this to be so terribly frightened about?

MRS. S. Oh! yes; surely you can understand. Just think, if he were really to do it! If he should take it into his head to climb up the scaffolding!

HILDA [*eagerly*]. Do you thing he will?

MRS. S. Oh, one can never tell what he might take into his head. I am afraid there is nothing he mightn't think of doing.

HILDA. Aha! Perhaps you too think he is—well——?

MRS. S. Oh, I don't know what to think about him now. The doctor has been telling me all sorts of things; and putting it all together with several things I have heard him say——

[DR. HERDAL *looks out at the door.*]

DR. H. Is he not coming soon?

MRS. S. Yes, I think so. I have sent for him at any rate.

DR. H. [*advancing*]. I am afraid you will have to go in, my dear lady—

MRS. S. Oh, no! Oh, no! I shall stay out here and wait for Halvard.

DR. H. But some ladies have just come to call on you——

MRS. S. Good Heavens, that too! And just at this moment!

DR. H. They say they positively must see the ceremony.

MRS. S. Well, well, I suppose I must go to them after all. It is my duty.

HILDA. Can't you ask the ladies to go away?

MRS. S. No, that would never do. Now they are here, it is my duty to see them. But do you stay out here in the meantime—and receive him when he comes.

DR. H. And try to occupy his attention as long as possible——

MRS. S. Yes, do, dear Miss Wangel. Keep a firm hold of him as ever you can.

HILDA. Would it not be best for you to do that?

MRS. S. Yes; God knows that is my duty. But when one has duties in so many directions——

DR. H. [*looks towards the garden*]. There he is coming.

MRS. S. And I have to go in!

DR. H. [*to* HILDA]. Don't say anything about my being here.

HILDA. Oh, no! I daresay I shall find something else to talk to Mr. Solness about.

MRS. S. And be sure you keep firm hold of him. I believe you can do it best.

[MRS. SOLNESS *and* DR. HERDAL *go into the house.* HILDA *remains standing on the verandah.* SOLNESS *comes from the garden, up the flight of steps.*]

SOL. Somebody wants me, I hear.

HILDA. Yes; it is I, Mr. Solness.

SOL. Oh, is it you, Hilda? I was afraid it might be Aline or the Doctor.

HILDA. You are very easily frightened, it seems!

SOL. Do you think so?

HILDA. Yes; people say that you are afraid to climb about—on the scaffoldings, you know.

SOL. Well, that is quite a special thing.

HILDA. Then it is true that you are afraid to do it?

SOL. Yes, I am.

HILDA. Afraid of falling down and killing yourself?

SOL. No, not of that.

HILDA. Of what, then?

SOL. I am afraid of retribution, Hilda.

HILDA. Of retribution? [*Shakes her head.*] I don't understand that.

SOL. Sit down and I will tell you something.

HILDA. Yes, do! At once!

[*She sits on a stool by the railing, and looks expectantly at him.*]

SOL. [*throws his hat on the table*]. You know that I began by building churches.

HILDA [*nods*]. I know that well.

SOL. For, you see, I came as a boy from a pious home in the country; and so it seemed to me that this church-building was the noblest task I could set myself.

HILDA. Yes, yes.

SOL. And I venture to say that I built those poor little churches with such honest and warm and heartfelt devotion that—that——

HILDA. That——? Well?

SOL. Well, that I think that He ought to have been pleased with me.

HILDA. He? What he?

SOL. He who was to have the churches, of course! He to whose honour and glory they were dedicated.

HILDA. Oh, indeed! But you are certain, then, that—that He was not—pleased with you?

SOL. [*scornfully*]. He pleased with me! How can you talk so, Hilda? He who gave the troll in me leave to lord it just as it pleased. He who bade them be at hand to serve me, both day and night—all these—all these——

HILDA. Devils——

SOL. Yes, of both kinds. Oh! no, He made me feel clearly that He was not pleased with me. [*Mysteriously.*] You see, that was really the reason why He made the old house burn down.

HILDA. Was that why?

SOL. Yes, don't you understand? He wanted to give me the chance of becoming an accomplished master in my own sphere—so that I might build all the more glorious churches for Him. At first I did not understand what He was driving at; but all of a sudden it flashed upon me.

HILDA. When was that?

SOL. It was when I was building the church-tower up at Lysanger.

HILDA. I thought so.

SOL. For you see, Hilda—up there, amidst those new surroundings, I used to go about musing and pondering within myself. Then I saw plainly why He had taken my little children from me. It was that I should have nothing else to attach myself to. No such thing as love and happiness, you understand. I was to be only a master builder—nothing else. And all my life long I was to go on building for Him. [*Laughs.*] But I can tell you nothing came of that!

HILDA. What did you do, then?

SOL. First of all, I searched and tried my own heart——

HILDA. And then?

SOL. Then I did the impossible—I no less than he.

HILDA. The impossible?

SOL. I had never before been able

o climb up to a great, free height. But that day I did it.

HILDA [*leaping up*]. Yes, yes, you id!

SOL. And when I stood there, high ver everything, and was hanging the reath over the vane, I said to him: Hear me now, thou Mighty One! From his day forward I will be a free build-r—I, too, in my sphere—just as thou n thine. I will never more build hurches for Thee—only homes for hu-an beings.

HILDA [*with great sparkling eyes*]. That was the song that I heard through ne air!

SOL. But afterwards his turn came.

HILDA. What do you mean by that?

SOL. [*looks despondently at her*]. Building homes for human beings—is ot worth a rap, Hilda.

HILDA. Do you say that now?

SOL. Yes, for now I see it. Men ave no use for these homes of theirs -to be happy in. And I should not ave had any use for such a home, if I ad had one. [*With a quiet, bitter ugh.*] See, that is the upshot of the hole affair, however far back I look. othing really built; nor anything sac-ficed for the chance of building. othing, nothing! the whole is nothing.

HILDA. Then you will never build ything more?

SOL. [*with animation*]. On the con-ary, I am just going to begin!

HILDA. What, then? What will you ild? Tell me at once!

SOL. I believe there is only one pos-ble dwelling-place for human happi-ss—and that is what I am going to ild now.

HILDA [*looks fixedly at him*]. Mr. Solness—you mean our castle?

SOL. The castles in the air—yes.

HILDA. I am afraid you would turn dizzy before we got half-way up.

SOL. Not if I can mount hand in hand with you, Hilda.

HILDA [*with an expression of suppressed resentment*]. Only with me? Will there be no others of the party?

SOL. Who else should there be?

HILDA. Oh—that girl—that Kaia at the desk. Poor thing—don't you want to take her with you too?

SOL. Oho! Was it about her that Aline was talking to you?

HILDA. Is it so—or is it not?

SOL. [*vehemently*]. I will not answer such a question. You must believe in me, wholly and entirely!

HILDA. All these ten years I have believed in you so utterly—so utterly.

SOL. You must go on believing in me!

HILDA. Then let me see you stand free and high up!

SOL. [*sadly*]. Oh! Hilda—it is not every day that I can do that.

HILDA [*passionately*]. I will have you do it? I will have it! [*imploringly.*] Just once more, Mr. Solness! Do the impossible once again!

SOL. [*stands and looks deep into her eyes*]. If I try it, Hilda, I will stand up there and talk to him as I did that time before.

HILDA [*in rising excitement*]. What will you say to Him?

SOL. I will say to Him: Hear me, Mighty Lord—thou may'st judge me as seems best to Thee. But hereafter I will build nothing but the loveliest thing in the world——

HILDA [*carried away*]. Yes—yes—yes!

SOL. ——build it together with a princess, whom I love——

HILDA. Yes, tell Him that! Tell Him that!

SOL. Yes. And then I will say to Him: Now I shall go down and throw my arms round her and kiss her——

HILDA. ——many times! Say that!

SOL. ——many, many times, I will say.

HILDA. And then——?

SOL. Then I will wave my hat—and come down to the earth—and do as I said to him.

HILDA [*with outstretched arms*]. Now I see you again as I did when there was song in the air.

SOL. [*looks at her with his head bowed*]. How have you become what you are, Hilda?

HILDA. How have you made me what I am?

SOL. [*shortly and firmly*]. The princess shall have her castle.

HILDA [*jubilant, clapping her hands*]. Oh, Mr. Solness——! My lovely, lovely castle. Our castle in the air!

SOL. On a firm foundation.

[*In the street a crowd of people has assembled, vaguely seen through the trees. Music of wind instruments is heard far away behind the new house.*]

[MRS. SOLNESS, *with a fur collar round her neck,* DOCTOR HERDAL *with her white shawl on his arm, and some ladies, come out on the verandah.* RAGNAR BROVIK *comes at the same time up from the garden.*]

MR. S. [*to* RAGNAR]. Are we to have music, too?

RAG. Yes. It's the band of the Ma son's Union. [*To* SOLNESS.] The fore man asked me to tell you that he i ready now to go up with the wreath.

SOL [*takes his hat*]. Good. I will g down to him myself.

MRS. S. [*anxiously*]. What have yo to do down there, Halvard?

SOL. [*curtly*]. I must be down be low with the men.

MRS S. Yes, down below—only dow below.

SOL. That is where I always stand— on everyday occasions.

[*He goes down the flight of step and away through the garden*].

MRS. S. [*calls after him over the rail ing*]. But do beg the man to be care ful when he goes up? Promise me that Halvard?

DR H. [*to* MRS. SOLNESS]. Don't yo see that I was right? He has given u all thought of that folly.

MR. S. Oh, what a relief! Twic workmen have fallen, and each tim they were killed on the spot. [*Turn to* HILDA]. Thank you, Miss Wange for having kept such a firm hold upo him. I should never have been abl to manage him.

DR. H. [*playfully*]. Yes, yes, Mis Wangel, you know how to keep firm hold on a man, when you give you mind to it.

[MRS. SOLNESS *and* DR. HERDAL *g up to the ladies, who are standin nearer to the steps and looking over th garden.* HILDA *remains standing be side the railing in the foreground* RAGNAR *goes up to her.*]

RAG. [*with suppressed laughter, hal whispering*]. Miss Wangel—do you se

ll those young fellows down in the treet?

HILDA. Yes.

RAG. They are my fellow students, ome to look at the master.

HILDA. What do they want to look t him for?

RAG. They want to see how he aren't climb to the top of his own ouse.

HILDA. Oh, that is what those boys ant, is it?

RAG. [*spitefully and scornfully*]. He as kept us down so long—now we are oing to see him keep quietly down be- w himself.

HILDA. You will not see that—not is time.

RAG. [*smiles*]. Indeed! Then where all we see him?

HILDA. High—high up by the vane! hat is where you will see him!

RAG. [*laughs*]. Him! Oh! yes, I aresay!

HILDA. His will is to reach the top— at the top you shall see him.

RAG. His will, yes; that I can easily elieve. But he simply cannot do it. is head would swim round, long, long efore he got half-way. He would have crawl down again on his hands and nees.

DR. H. [*points across*]. Look! There es the foreman up the ladders.

MRS. S. And of course he has the reath to carry, too. Oh, I do hope will be careful!

RAG. [*stares incredulously and outs*]. Why, but it's——

HILDA [*breaking out in jubilation*]. is the master builder himself!

MRS. S. [*screams with terror*]. Yes, it is Halvard! Oh, my great God——! Halvard! Halvard!

DR. H. Hush! Don't shout to him!

MRS. S. [*half beside herself*]. I must go to him! I must get him to come down again!

DR. H. [*holds her*]. Don't move, any of you! Not a sound!

HILDA [*immovable, follows* SOLNESS *with her eyes*]. He climbs and climbs. Higher and higher! Higher and higher! Look! Just look!

RAG. [*breathless*]. He must turn now. He can't possibly help it.

HILDA. He climbs and climbs. He will soon be at the top now.

MRS. S. Oh, I shall die of terror. I cannot bear to see it.

DR. H. Then don't look up at him.

HILDA. There he is standing on the topmost planks. Right at the top!

DR. H. Nobody must move! Do you hear?

HILDA [*exulting with quiet intensity*]. At last! At last! Now I see him great and free again!

RAG. [*almost voiceless*]. But this is im—

HILDA. So I have seen him all through these ten years. How secure he stands. Frightfully thrilling all the same. Look at him! Now he is hanging the wreath round the vane.

RAG. I feel as if I were looking at something utterly impossible.

HILDA. Yes, it is the impossible that he is doing now! [*With the indefinable expression in her eyes.*] Can you see anyone else up there with him?

RAG. There is no one else.

HILDA. Yes, there is one he is striving with.

RAG. You are mistaken.

HILDA. Then do you hear no song in the air, either?

RAG. It must be the wind in the tree-tops.

HILDA. *I* hear a song—a mighty song! [*Shouts in wild jubilation and glee*]. Look, look! Now he is waving his hat! He is waving it to us down here! Oh, wave, wave back to him. For now it is finished! [*Snatches the white shawl from the* DOCTOR, *waves it, and shouts up to* SOLNESS.] Hurrah for Master Builder Solness!

DR. H. Stop! Stop! For God's sake——!

[*The ladies on the verandah wave their pocket handkerchiefs, and the shouts of "Hurrah" are taken up in the street below. Then they are suddenly silenced, and the crowd bursts out into a shriek of horror. A human body, with planks and fragments of wood, is vaguely perceived crashing down behind the trees.*

MRS. S. *and the* LADIES [*at the same time*]. He is falling! He is falling!

[MRS SOLNESS *totters, falls backwards, swooning, and is caught, amid cries and confusion, by the ladies. The crowd in the street breaks down the fence and storms into the garden. At the same time* DR. HERDAL, *too, rushes down thither. A short pause.*]

HILDA [*stares fixedly upwards and says, as if petrified*]. My Master Builder.

RAG. [*supports himself, trembling against the railing*]. He must be dashed to pieces—killed on the spot.

One of the LADIES [*whilst* MRS. SOLNESS *is carried into the house*]. Run down for the doctor——

RAG. I can't stir a foot——

ANOTHER LADY. Then call to someone!

RAG. [*tries to call out*]. How is it? Is he alive?

A VOICE [*below in the garden*]. Mr. Solness is dead!

OTHER VOICES [*nearer*]. The head is all crushed.—He fell right into the quarry.

HILDA [*turns to* RAGNAR, *and says quietly*]. I can't see him up there now.

RAG. This is terrible. So, after all he could not do it.

HILDA [*as if in quiet spell-bound triumph*]. But he mounted right to the top. And I heard harps in the air. [*Waves her shawl in the air, and shrieks with wild intensity.*] My—my Master Builder!

Volume VIII

Pillars of Society

THE PERSONS OF THE PLAY

ARSTEN BERNICK, a shipbuilder.

RS. BERNICK, his wife.

LAF, their son, thirteen years old.

ARTHA BERNICK, Karsten Bernick's sister.

HAN TONNESEN, Mrs. Bernick's younger brother.

NA HESSEL, Mrs. Bernick's elder half-sister.

LMAR TONNESEN, Mrs. Bernick's cousin.

NA DORF, a young girl living with the Bernicks.

RLUND, a schoolmaster.

MMEL, a merchant.

GELAND, NDSTAD, } tradesmen.

RAP, Bernick's confidential clerk.

NE, foreman of Bernick's shipbuilding yard.

RS. RUMMEL.

LDA RUMMEL, her daughter.

RS. HOLT.

TTA HOLT, her daughter.

RS. LYNGE.

wnsfolk and visitors, foreign sailors, steamboat passengers, etc., etc.

The action takes place at the house BERNICK *in one of the smaller coast vns in Norway.*

ACT I

SCENE—*A spacious garden-room in the* BERNICK'S *house. In the foreground on the left is a door leading to* BERNICK'S *business room; farther back in the same wall, a similar door. In the middle of the opposite wall is a large entrance-door, which leads to the street. The wall in the background is almost wholly composed of plate-glass; a door in it opens upon a broad flight of steps which lead down to the garden; a sun-awning is stretched over the steps. Below the steps a part of the garden is visible, bordered by a fence with a small gate in it. On the other side of the fence runs a street, the opposite side of which is occupied by small wooden houses painted in bright colours. It is summer, and the sun is shining warmly. People are seen every now and then, passing along the street and stopping to talk to one another; others going in and out of a shop at the corner; etc., etc.*

In the room a gathering of ladies is seated round a table. MRS. BERNICK *is presiding; on her left side are* MRS. HOLT *and her daughter* NETTA, *and next to them* MRS. RUMMEL *and* HILDA RUMMEL. *On* MRS. BERNICK'S *right are* MRS. LYNGE, MARTHA BERNICK *and* DINA DORF. *All the ladies are busy working. On the table lie great piles of linen garments and other articles of clothing, some half finished and some merely cut out. Farther back, at a small table on which two pots of flowers and a glass of sugared water are*

standing, RORLUND *is sitting, reading aloud from a book with gilt edges, but only loud enough for the spectators to catch a word now and then. Out in the garden* OLAF BERNICK *is running about and shooting at a target with a toy crossbow.*

After a moment AUNE *comes in quietly through the door on the right. There is a slight interruption in the reading.* MRS. BERNICK *nods to him and points to the door on the left.* AUNE *goes quietly across, knocks softly at the door of* BERNICK'S *room, and after a moment's pause knocks again.* KRAP *comes out of the room, with his hat in his hand and some papers under his arm.*]

KRAP. Oh, it was you knocking?

AUNE. Mr. Bernick sent for me.

KRAP. He did; but he cannot see you. He has deputed me to tell you—

AUNE. Deputed you? All the same, I would much rather—

KRAP. —deputed me to tell you what he wanted to say to you. You must give up these Saturday lectures of yours to the men.

AUNE. Indeed? I supposed I might use my own time—

KRAP. You must not use your own time in making the men useless in working hours. Last Saturday you were talking to them of the harm that would be done to the workmen by our new machines and the new working methods at the yard. What makes you do that?

AUNE. I do it for the good of the community.

KRAP. That's curious, because Mr. Bernick says it is disorganising the community.

AUNE. My community is not M Bernick's, Mr. Krap! As president c the Industrial Association, I must—

KRAP. You are, first and foremos president of Mr. Bernick's shipbuildir yard; and, before everything else, yo have to do your duty to the communit known as the firm of Bernick & Co that is what every one of us lives fo Well, now you know what Mr. Bernic had to say to you.

AUNE. Mr. Bernick would not hav put it that way, Mr. Krap! But know well enough whom I have thank for this. It is that damne American boat. Those fellows expe to get work done here the way the are accustomed to it over there, ar that—

KRAP. Yes, yes, but I can't go in all these details. You know now wh Mr. Bernick means, and that is su ficient. Be so good as to go back the yard; probably you are need there. I shall be down myself in little while.—Excuse me, ladies! [*Bo to the ladies and goes out through t garden and down the street.* AU *goes quietly out to the right.* RORLUN *who has continued his reading duri the foregoing conversation, which h been carried on in low tones, has n come to the end of the book, and shu it with a bang.*]

ROR. There, my dear ladies, that the end of it.

MRS. R. What an instructive tale

MRS. H. And such a good moral!

MRS. B. A book like that really giv one something to think about.

ROR. Quite so; it presents a saluta contrast to what, unfortunately, me our eyes every day in the newspap

ıd magazines. Look at the gilded and ainted exterior displayed by any large mmunity, and think what it really onceals!—emptiness and rottenness, I may say so; no foundation of orality beneath it. In a word, these rge communities of our now-a-days e whited sepulchres.

Mrs. H. How true! How true!

Mrs. R. And for an example of it e need look no farther than at the ew of the American ship that is lying re just now.

Ror. Oh, I would rather not speak such offscourings of humanity as at. But even in higher circles—what the case there? A spirit of doubt d unrest on all sides; minds never at ace, and instability characterising all eir behaviour. Look how completely mily life is undermined over there! ok at their shameless love of cast- r doubt on even the most serious ıths!

Dina [*without looking up from her rk*]. But are there not many big ngs done there too?

Ror. Big things done—? I do not derstand—.

Mrs. H. [*in amazement*]. Good acious, Dina—!

Mrs. R. [*in the same breath*]. Dina, w can you—?

Ror. I think it would scarcely be a od thing for us if such "big things" came the rule here. No, indeed, we ght to be only too thankful that ngs are as they are in this country. is true enough that tares grow up ongst our wheat here too, alas; but do our best conscientiously to weed m out as well as we are able. The portant thing is to keep society pure, ladies—to ward off all the hazardous experiments that a restless age seeks to force upon us.

Mrs. H. And there are more than enough of them in the wind, unhappily.

Mrs. R. Yes, you know last year we only by a hair's breadth escaped the project of having a railway here.

Mrs. B. Ah, my husband prevented that.

Ror. Providence, Mrs. Bernick. You may be certain that your husband was the instrument of a higher Power when he refused to have anything to do with the scheme.

Mrs. B. And yet they said such horrible things about him in the newspapers! But we have quite forgotten to thank you, Mr. Rorlund. It is really more than friendly of you to sacrifice so much of your time to us.

Ror. Not at all. This is holiday time, and—

Mrs. B. Yes, but it is a sacrifice all the same, Mr. Rorlund.

Ror. [*drawing his chair nearer*]. Don't speak of it, my dear lady. Are you not all of you making some sacrifice in a good cause?—and that willingly and gladly? These poor fallen creatures for whose rescue we are working may be compared to soldiers wounded on the field of battle; you, ladies, are the kind-hearted sisters of mercy who prepare the lint for these stricken ones, lay the bandages softly on their wounds, heal them and cure them—

Mrs. B. It must be a wonderful gift to be able to see everything in such a beautiful light.

Ror. A good deal of it is inborn in

one—but it can be to a great extent acquired, too. All that is needful is to see things in the light of a serious mission in life. [*To* MARTHA.] What do you say, Miss Bernick? Have you not felt as if you were standing on firmer ground since you gave yourself up to your school work?

MARTHA. I really do not know what to say. There are times, when I am in the schoolroom down there, that I wish I were far away out on the stormy seas.

ROR. That is merely temptation, dear Miss Bernick. You ought to shut the doors of your mind upon such disturbing guests as that. By the "stormy seas"—for of course you do not intend me to take your words literally—you mean the restless tide of the great outer world, where so many are shipwrecked. Do you really set such store on the life you hear rushing by outside? Only look out into the street. There they go, walking about in the heat of the sun, perspiring and tumbling about over their little affairs. No, we undoubtedly have the best of it, who are able to sit here in the cool and turn our backs on the quarter from which disturbance comes.

MARTHA. Yes, I have no doubt you are perfectly right—

ROR. And in a house like this—in a good and pure home, where family life shows in its fairest colours—where peace and harmony rule—. [*To* MRS. BERNICK]. What are you listening to, Mrs. Bernick?

MRS. B. [*who has turned towards the door of* BERNICK'S *room*]. They are talking very loud in there.

ROR. Is there anything particul going on?

MRS. B. I don't know. I can he that there is somebody with my hu band.

[HILMAR TONNESEN, *smoking cigar, appears in the doorway on t right, but stops short at the sight the company of ladies.*]

HILMAR. Oh, excuse me—. [*Tur to go back*].

MRS. B. No, Hilmar, come along i you are not disturbing us. Do y want something?

HILMAR. No, I only wanted to lo in here.—Good morning, ladies. [MRS. BERNICK]. Well, what is the r sult?

MRS. B. Of what?

HILMAR. Karsten has summoned meeting, you know.

MRS. B. Has he? What about?

HILMAR. Oh, it is this railway no sense over again.

MRS. R. Is it possible?

MRS. B. Poor Karsten, is he to ha more annoyance over that?

ROR. But how do you explain th Mr. Tonnesen? You know that l year Mr. Bernick made it perfect clear that he would not have a railw here.

HILMAR. Yes, that is what I thoug too; but I met Krap, his confident clerk, and he told me that the railw project had been taken up again, a that Mr. Bernick was in consultati with three of our local capitalists.

MRS. R. Ah, I was right in thinki I heard my husband's voice.

HILMAR. Of course Mr. Rummell in it, and so are Sandstad and Mich

igeland—"Saint Michael," as they ll him.

ROR. Ahem!

HILMAR. I beg your pardon, Mr. orlund?

MRS. B. Just when everything was so ce and peaceful.

HILMAR. Well, as far as I am con- rned, I have not the slightest objec- on to their beginning their squabbling gain. It will be a little diversion, any ay.

ROR. I think we can dispense with at sort of diversion.

HILMAR. It depends how you are nstituted. Certain natures feel the st of battle now and then. But un- rtunately life in a country town does t offer much in that way, and it 'n't given to every one to— [*turns the aves of the book* RORLUND *has been ading*]. "Woman as the Handmaid Society." What sort of drivel is is?

MRS. B. My dear Hilmar, you must t say that. You certainly have not ad the book.

HILMAR. No, and I have no intention reading it, either.

MRS. B. Surely you are not feeling ite well to-day.

HILMAR. No, I am not.

MRS. B. Perhaps you did not sleep ll last night?

HILMAR. No, I slept very badly. I nt for a walk yesterday evening for health's sake; and I finished up at club and read a book about a Polar edition. There is something brac- in following the adventures of men o are battling with the elements.

MRS. R. But it does not appear to have done you much good, Mr. Tonnesen.

HILMAR. No, it certainly did not. I lay all night tossing about, only half asleep, and dreamt that I was being chased by a hideous walrus.

OLAF [*who meanwhile has come up the steps from the garden*]. Have you been chased by a walrus, uncle?

HILMAR. I dreamt it, you duffer! Do you mean to say you are still playing about with that ridiculous bow? Why don't you get hold of a real gun?

OLAF. I should like to, but—

HILMAR. There is some sense in a thing like that; it is always an excitement every time you fire it off.

OLAF. And then I could shoot bears, uncle. But daddy won't let me.

MRS. B. You really mustn't put such ideas into his head, Hilmar.

HILMAR. Hm!—it's a nice breed we are educating up now-a-days, isn't it? We *talk* a great deal about manly sports, goodness knows—but we only play with the question, all the same; there is never any serious inclination for the bracing discipline that lies in facing danger manfully. Don't stand pointing your cross-bow at me, blockhead—it might go off.

OLAF. No, uncle, there is no arrow in it.

HILMAR. You don't know that there isn't—there may be, all the same. Take it away, I tell you!—Why on earth have you never gone over to America on one of your father's ships? You might have seen a buffalo hunt then, or a fight with Red Indians.

MRS. B. Oh, Hilmar—!

OLAF. I should like that awfully,

uncle; and then perhaps I might meet Uncle Johan and Aunt Lona.

HILMAR. Hm!—Rubbish.

MRS. B. You can go down into the garden again now, Olaf.

OLAF. Mother, may I go out into the street, too?

MRS. B. Yes, but not too far, mind.

[OLAF *runs down into the garden and out through the gate in the fence.*]

ROR. You ought not to put such fancies into the child's head, Mr. Tonnesen.

HILMAR. No, of course he is destined to be a miserable stay-at-home, like so many others.

ROR. But why do you not take a trip over there yourself?

HILMAR. I? With my wretched health? Of course I get no consideration on that account. But putting that out of the question, you forget that one has certain obligations to perform towards the community of which one forms a part. There must be *some one* here to hold aloft the banner of the Ideal.—Ugh, there he is shouting again!

THE LADIES. Who is shouting?

HILMAR. I am sure I don't know. They are raising their voices so loud in there that it gets on my nerves.

MRS. B. I expect it is my husband, Mr. Tonnesen. But you must remember he is so accustomed to addressing large audiences—

ROR. I should not call the others low-voiced, either.

HILMAR. Good Lord, no!—not on any question that touches their pockets. Everything here ends in these petty material considerations. Ugh!

MRS. B. Any way, that is a better state of things than it used to be wh everything ended in mere frivolity.

MRS. L. Used things really to be bad as that here?

MRS. R. Indeed they were, M Lynge. You may think yourself luc that you did not live here then.

MRS. H. Yes, times have chang and no mistake. When I look back the days when I was a girl—

MRS. R. Oh, you need not look ba more than fourteen or fifteen yea God forgive us, what a life we le There used to be a Dancing Soci and a Musical Society—

MRS. B. And the Dramatic Club. remember it very well.

MRS. R. Yes, that was where yo play was performed, Mr. Tonnese

HILMAR [*from the back of room*]. What, what?

ROR. A play by Mr. Tonnesen?

MRS. R. Yes, it was long before y came here, Mr. Rorlund. And it v only performed once.

MRS. L. Was that not the play which you told me you took the p of a young man's sweetheart, M Rummel?

MRS. R. [*glancing towards* R LUND]. I? I really cannot rememb Mrs. Lynge. But I remember well the riotous gaiety that used to go on

MRS. H. Yes, there were house could name in which two large dinn parties were given in one week.

MRS. L. And surely I have he that a touring theatrical company ca here, too?

MRS. R. Yes, that was the wo thing of the lot—

MRS. H. [*uneasily*]. Ahem!

MRS. R. Did you say a theatr

ıpany? No, I don't remember that ıll.

IRS. L. Oh! yes, and I have been l they played all sorts of mad nks. What is really the truth of se stories?

IRS. R. There is practically no h in them, Mrs. Lynge.

IRS. H. Dina, my love, will you e me that linen?

IRS. B. [*at the same time*]. Dina, r, will you go and ask Katrine to ıg us our coffee?

IARTHA. I will go with you, Dina. DINA *and* MARTHA *go out by the her door on the left.*]

IRS. B. [*getting up*]. Will you ex- e me for a few minutes? I think will have our coffee outside. [*She s out to the verandah and sets to k to lay a table.* RORLUND *stands he doorway talking to her.* HIL- *sits outside, smoking.*]

IRS. R. [*in a low voice*]. My good- , Mrs. Lynge, how you frightened

IRS. L. I?

IRS. H. Yes, but you know it was that began it, Mrs. Rummel.

IRS. R. I? How can you say such ıing, Mrs. Holt? Not a syllable ed my lips!

IRS. L. But what does it all mean?

RS. R. What made you begin to about—? Think—did you not see Dina was in the room?

RS. L. Dina? Good gracious, is e anything wrong with—?

RS. H. And in this house, too! you not know it was Mrs. Ber- 's brother—?

RS. L. What about him? I know ing about it at all; I am quite new to the place, you know.

MRS. R. Have you not heard that—? Ahem! [*To her daughter.*] Hilda, dear, you can go for a little stroll in the garden.

MRS. H. You go too, Netta. And be very kind to poor Dina when she comes back. [HILDA *and* NETTA *go out into the garden.*]

MRS. L. Well, what about Mrs. Bernick's brother?

MRS. R. Don't you know the dreadful scandal about him?

MRS. L. A dreadful scandal about Mr. Tonnesen?

MRS. R. Good Heavens, no: Mr. Tonnesen is her cousin, of course, Mrs. Lynge. I am speaking of her brother

——

MRS. H. The wicked Mr. Tonnesen—

MRS. R. His name was Johan. He ran away to America.

MRS. H. Had to run away, you must understand.

MRS. L. Then it is he the scandal is about?

MRS. R. Yes; there was something—how shall I put it?—there was something of some kind between him and Dina's mother. I remember it all as if it were yesterday. Johan Tonnesen was in old Mrs. Bernick's office then; Karsten Bernick had just come back from Paris—he had not yet become engaged—

MRS. L. Yes, but what was the scandal?

MRS. R. Well, you must know that Moller's company were acting in the town that winter——

MRS. H. And Dorf, the actor, and his wife were in the company. All the

young men in the town were infatuated with her.

MRS. R. Yes, goodness knows how they could think *her* pretty. Well, Dorf came home late one evening——

MRS. H. Quite unexpectedly.

MRS. R. And found his—. No, really it isn't a thing one can talk about.

MRS. H. After all, Mrs. Rummel, he didn't find anything, because the door was locked on the inside.

MRS. R. Yes, that is just what I was going to say—he found the door locked. And—just think of it—the man that was in the house had to jump out of the window.

MRS. H. Right down from an attic window.

MRS. L. And that was Mrs. Bernick's brother?

MRS. R. Yes, it was he.

MRS. L. And that was why he ran away to America?

MRS. H. Yes, he had to run away, you may be sure.

MRS. R. Because something was discovered afterwards that was nearly as bad; just think—he had been making free with the cash-box—

MRS. H. But, you know, no one was certain of that, Mrs. Rummel; perhaps there was no truth in the rumour.

MRS. R. Well, I must say—! Wasn't it known all over the town? Did not old Mrs. Bernick nearly go bankrupt as the result of it? However, God forbid *I* should be the one to spread such reports.

MRS. H. Well, anyway, Mrs. Dorf didn't get the money, because she—

MRS. L. Yes, what happened to Dina's parents afterwards?

MRS. R. Well, Dorf deserted both his wife and his child. But madam was impudent enough to stay here whole year. Of course she had not t face to appear at the theatre any mo but she kept herself by taking in wa ing and sewing—

MRS. H. And then she tried to up a dancing school.

MRS. R. Naturally that was no go What parents would trust their ch dren to such a woman? But it did n last very long. The fine madam w not accustomed to work; she got son thing wrong with her lungs and died it.

MRS. L. What a horrible scandal

MRS. R. Yes, you can imagine h hard it was upon the Bernicks. It the dark spot among the sunshine their good fortune, as Rummel or put it. So never speak about it in t house, Mrs. Lynge.

MRS. H. And for heaven's sa never mention the step-sister either

MRS. L. Oh, so Mrs. Bernick has step-sister, too?

MRS. R. *Had,* luckily; for the lationship between them is all ov now. She was an extraordinary pers too! Would you believe it, she cut h hair short, and used to go about men's boots in bad weather!

MRS. H. And when her st brother—the black sheep—had go away, and the whole town natura was talking about him—what do y think she did? She went out to Am ica to him!

MR. R. Yes, but remember t scandal *she* caused before she we Mrs. Holt!

MRS. H. Hush, don't speak of i

MRS. L. My goodness, did s create a scandal too?

MRS. R. I think you ought to h

Mrs. Lynge. Mr. Bernick had just engaged to Betty Tonnesen, and two of them went arm in arm into aunt's room to tell her the news—

Rs. H. The Tonnesens' parents e dead, you know——

Rs. R. When, suddenly, up got a Hessel from her chair and gave refined and well-bred Karsten Ber- such a box on the ear that his l swam.

Rs. L. Well, I am sure I never—

Rs. H. It is absolutely true.

Rs. R. And then she packed her and went away to America.

Rs. L. I suppose she had had her on him for herself.

Rs. R. Of course she had. She gined that he and she would make atch of it when he came back from s.

Rs. H. The idea of her thinking a thing! Karsten Bernick—a man he world and the pink of courtesy perfect gentleman—the darling of he ladies—

Rs. R. And, with it all, such an lent young man, Mrs. Holt—so l.

Rs. L. But what has this Miss Hes- nade of herself in America?

Rs. R. Well, you see, over that [as husband once put it] has been n a veil which one should hesitate t.

Rs. L. What do you mean?

Rs. R. She no longer has any con- on with the family, as you may ose; but this much the whole town s, that she has sung for money inking saloons over there——

Rs. H. And has given lectures in c——

Mrs. R. And has published some mad kind of book.

Mrs. L. You don't say so!

Mrs. R. Yes, it is true enough that Lona Hessel is one of the spots on the sun of the Bernick family's good fortune. Well, now you know the whole story, Mrs. Lynge. I am sure I would never have spoken about it except to put you on your guard.

Mrs. L. Oh, you may be sure I shall be most careful. But that poor child Dina Dorf! I am truly sorry for her.

Mrs. R. Well, really it was a stroke of good luck for her. Think what it would have meant if she had been brought up by such parents! Of course we did our best for her, every one of us, and gave her all the good advice we could. Eventually Miss Bernick got her taken into this house.

Mrs. H. But she has always been a difficult child to deal with. It is only natural—with all the bad example she had had before her. A girl of that sort is not like one of our own; one must be lenient with her.

Mrs. R. Hush—here she comes. [*In a louder voice.*] Yes, Dina is really a clever girl. Oh, is that you, Dina? We are just putting away the things.

Mrs. H. How delicious your coffee smells, my dear Dina. A nice cup of coffee like that—.

Mrs. B. [*calling in from the verandah*]. Will you come out here? [*Meanwhile* Martha *and* Dina *have helped the* Maid *to bring out the coffee. All the ladies seat themselves on the verandah, and talk with a great show of kindness to* Dina. *In a few moments* Dina *comes back into the room and looks for her sewing.*]

MRS. B. [*from the coffee table*]. Dina, won't you—?

DINA. No, thank you. [*Sits down to her sewing.* MRS. BERNICK *and* RORLUND *exchange a few words; a moment afterwards he comes back into the room, makes a pretext for going up to the table, and begins speaking to* DINA *in low tones.*]

ROR. Dina.

DINA. Yes?

ROR. Why don't you want to sit with the others?

DINA. When I came in with the coffee, I could see from the strange lady's face that they had been talking about me.

ROR. But did you not see as well how agreeable she was to you out there?

DINA. That is just what I will not stand!

ROR. You are very self-willed, Dina.

DINA. Yes.

ROR. But why?

DINA. Because it is my nature.

ROR. Could you not try to alter your nature?

DINA. No.

ROR. Why not?

DINA [*looking at him*]. Because I am one of the "poor fallen creatures," you know.

ROR. For shame, Dina.

DINA. So was my mother.

ROR. Who has spoken to you about such things?

DINA. No one; they never do. Why don't they? They all handle me in such a gingerly fashion, as if they thought I should go to pieces if they—. Oh, how I hate all this kind-heartedness.

ROR. My dear Dina, I can quite understand that you feel repressed h but—

DINA. Yes; if only I could get ri away from here. I could make my o way quite well, if only I did not amongst people who are so—so—

ROR. So what?

DINA. So proper and so moral.

ROR. Oh! but, Dina, you don't m that.

DINA. You know quite well in w sense I mean it. Hilda and Netta c here every day, to be exhibited to as good examples. I can never be beautifully behaved as they; I d *want* to be. If only I were right a from it all, I should grow to be w something.

ROR. But you are worth a g deal, Dina dear.

DINA. What good does that do here?

ROR. Get right away, you say? you mean it seriously?

DINA. I would not stay here a longer, if it were not for you.

ROR. Tell me, Dina—why is it t you are fond of being with me?

DINA. Because you teach me so m that is beautiful.

ROR. Beautiful? Do you call the tle I can teach you, beautiful?

DINA. Yes. Or perhaps, to be curate, it is not that you teach me a thing; but when I listen to you talk I see beautiful visions.

ROR. What do you mean exa when you call a thing beautiful?

DINA. I have never thought it

ROR. Thing it out now, then. W do you understand by a beautiful thi

DINA. A beautiful thing is someth that is great—and far off.

ROR. Hm!—Dina, I am so deeply ncerned about you, my dear.

DINA. Only that?

ROR. You know perfectly well that u are dearer to me than I can say.

DINA. If I were Hilda or Netta, you ould not be afraid to let people see it.

ROR. Ah, Dina, you can have no idea the number of things I am forced take into consideration. When it is man's lot to be a moral pillar of the mmunity he lives in, he cannot be circumspect. If only I could be rtain that people would interpret my otives properly—. But no matter for at; you must, and shall be, helped to se yourself. Dina, is it a bargain tween us that when I come—when cumstances allow me to come—to you d say: "Here is my hand," you will ke it and be my wife? Will you omise me that, Dina?

DINA. Yes.

ROR. Thank you, thank you! Be use for my part, too—oh, Dina, I e you so dearly. Hush! Some one coming. Dina—for my sake—go out the others. [*She goes out to the cof- table. At the same moment* RUM- L, SANDSTAD *and* VIGELAND *come t of* BERNICK'S *room, followed by* RNICK, *who has a bundle of papers his hand.*]

BER. Well, then, the matter is set- d.

VIG. Yes, I hope to goodness it is.

RUM. It is settled, Bernick. A rseman's word stands as firm as the ks on Dovrefjeld, you know!

BER. And no one must falter, no one e way, no matter what opposition we et with.

RUM. We will stand or fall together, rnick.

HILMAR [*coming in from the veran- dah*]. Fall? If I may ask, isn't it the railway scheme that is going to fall?

BERNICK. No, on the contrary, it is going to proceed—

RUM. Full steam, Mr. Tonnesen.

HILMAR [*coming nearer*]. Really?

ROR. How is that?

MRS. B. [*at the verandah door*]. Karsten, dear, what is it that—?

BER. My dear Betty, how can it interest you? [*To the three men.*] We must get out lists of subscribers, and the sooner the better. Obviously our four names must head the list. The positions we occupy in the community makes it our duty to make ourselves as prominent as possible in the affair.

SAN. Obviously, Mr. Bernick.

RUM. The thing *shall* go through, Bernick; I swear it shall!

BER. Oh, I have not the least anticipation of failure. We must see that we work, each one among the circle of his own acquaintances; and if we can point to the fact that the scheme is exciting a lively interest in all ranks of society, then it stands to reason that our Municipal Corporation will have to contribute its share.

MRS. B. Karsten, you really must come out here and tell us—

BER. My dear Betty, it is an affair that does not concern ladies at all.

HILMAR. Then you are really going to support this railway scheme after all?

BER. Yes, naturally.

ROR. But last year, Mr. Bernick—

BER. Last year it was quite another thing. At that time it was a question of a line along the coast——

VIG. Which would have been quite superfluous, Mr. Rorlund; because, of

course, we have our steamboat service——

SAN. And would have been quite unreasonably costly——

RUM. Yes, and would have absolutely ruined certain important interests in the town.

BER. The main point was that it would not have been to the advantage of the community as a whole. That is why I opposed it, with the result that the inland line was resolved upon.

HILMAR. Yes, but surely that will not touch the towns about here.

BER. It will eventually touch *our* town, my dear Hilmar, because we are going to build a branch line here.

HILMAR. Aha—a new scheme, then?

RUM. Yes, isn't it a capital scheme? What?

ROR. Hm!—

VIG. There is no denying that it looks as though Providence had just planned the configuration of the country to suit a branch line.

ROR. Do you really mean it, Mr. Vigeland?

BER. Yes, I must confess it seems to me as if it had been the hand of Providence that caused me to take a journey on business this spring, in the course of which I happened to traverse a valley through which I had never been before. It came across my mind like a flash of lightning that this was where we could carry a branch line down to our town. I got an engineer to survey the neighbourhood, and have here the provisional calculations and estimate; so there is nothing to hinder us.

MRS. B. [*who is still with the other ladies at the verandah door*]. But my dear Karsten, to think that you shou have kept it all a secret from us!

BER. Ah, my dear Betty, I knew y would not have been able to grasp t exact situation. Besides, I have n mentioned it to a living soul till to-da But now the decisive moment has con and we must work openly and with our might. Yes, even if I have to ri all I have for its sake, I mean to pu the matter through.

RUM. And we will back you u Bernick; you may rely upon that.

ROR. Do you really promise us much, then, from this undertakin gentlemen?

BER. Yes, undoubtedly. Think wh a lever it will be to raise the status our whole community. Just think the immense tracts of forest-land th it will make accessible; think of all t rich deposits of minerals we shall able to work; think of the river wi one waterfall above another! Think the possibilities that open out in t way of manufactories!

ROR. And are you not afraid th an easier intercourse with the depra ty of the outer world—?

BER. No, you may make your mi quite easy on that score, Mr. Rorlu Our little hive of industry rests no a-days, God be thanked, on such sound moral basis; we have all of helped to drain it, if I may use t expression; and that we will contin to do, each in his degree. You, M Rorlund, will continue your ric blessed activity in our schools and c homes. We, the practical men of bu ness, will be the support of the co munity by extending its welfare wit as wide a radius as possible; and c women—yes, come nearer, ladies, y

l like to hear it—our women, I say, r wives and daughters—you ladies, l work on undisturbed in the service charity, and moreover will be a help d a comfort to your nearest and arest, as my dear Betty and Martha e to me and Olaf—. [*Looks round n.*] Where is Olaf to-day?

MRS. B. Oh, in the holidays it is im-ssible to keep him at home.

BER. I have no doubt he is down the shore again. You will see he will d by coming to some harm there.

HILMAR. Bah! A little sport with forces of nature—

MRS. R. Your family affection is utiful, Mr. Bernick!

BER. Well, the family is the kernel society. A good home, honoured and sty friends, a little snug family cir- where no disturbing elements can t their shadow—. [KRAP *comes in m the right, bringing letters and pers.*]

KRAP. The foreign mail, Mr. Ber-k—and a telegram from New York.

BER. [*taking the telegram*]. Ah—m the owners of the "Indian Girl."

RUM. Is the mail in? Oh, then you st excuse me.

VIG. And me too.

SAN. Good day, Mr. Bernick.

BER. Good day, good day, gentle-n. And remember, we have a meet- this afternoon at five o'clock.

THE THREE MEN. Yes—quite so—course. [*They go out to the right.*]

BER. [*who has read the telegram*]. s is thoroughly American! Abso-ly shocking!

MRS. B. Good gracious, Garsten, at is it?

BER. Look at this, Krap! Read it!

KRAP [*reading*]. "Do the least re-pairs possible. Send over 'Indian Girl' as soon as she is ready to sail; good time of year; at a pinch her cargo will keep her afloat." Well, I must say—

ROR. You see the state of things in these vaunted great communities!

BER. You are quite right; not a moment's consideration for human life, when it is a question of making a profit. [*To* KRAP:] Can the "Indian Girl" go to sea in four—or five—days?

KRAP. Yes, if Mr. Vigeland will agree to our stopping work on the "Palm Tree" meanwhile.

BER. Hm—he won't. Well, be so good as to look through the letters. And look here, did you see Olaf down at the quay?

KRAP. No, Mr. Bernick. [*Goes into* BERNICK'S *room.*]

BER. [*looking at the telegram again*]. These gentlemen think nothing of risking eight men's lives—

HILMAR. Well, it is a sailor's calling to brave the elements; it must be a fine tonic to the nerves to be like that, with only a thin plank between one and the abyss—

BER. I should like to see the ship-owner amongst us who would condescend to such a thing! There is not one that would do it—not a single one! [*Sees* OLAF *coming up to the house.*] Ah, thank Heaven, here he is, safe and sound. [OLAF, *with a fishing-line in his hand, comes running up the garden and in through the verandah.*]

OLAF. Uncle Hilmar, I have been down and seen the steamer.

BER. Have you been down to the quay again?

OLAF. No, I have only been out in a boat. But just think, Uncle Hilmar, a whole circus company has come on

shore, with horses and animals; and there were such lots of passengers.

MRS. R. No, are we really to have a circus?

ROR. We? I certainly have no desire to see it.

MRS. R. No, of course I don't mean we, but—

DINA. I should like to see a circus very much.

OLAF. So should I.

HILMAR. You are a duffer. Is that anything to see? Mere tricks. No, it would be something quite different to see the Gaucho careering over the Pampas on his snorting mustag. But, Heaven help us, in these wretched little towns of ours—

OLAF [*pulling at* MARTHA'S *dress*]. Look, Aunt Martha! Look, there they come!

MRS. H. Good Lord, yes—here they come.

MRS. L. Ugh, what horrid people!

[*A number of passengers and a whole crowd of townsfolk are seen coming up the street.*]

MRS. R. They *are* a set of mountebanks, certainly. Just look at that woman in the grey dress, Mrs. Holt—the one with a knapsack over her shoulder.

MRS. H. Yes—look—she has slung it on the handle of her parasol. The manager's wife, I expect.

MRS. R. And there is the manager himself, no doubt. He looks a regular pirate. Don't look at him, Hilda!

MRS. H. Nor you, Netta!

OLAF. Mother, the manager is bowing to us.

BER. What?

MRS. B. What are you saying, child?

MRS. R. Yes, and—good Heavens the woman is bowing to us too.

BER. That is a little *too* cool!

MARTHA [*exclaims involuntarily*] Ah—!

MRS. B. What is it, Martha?

MARTHA. Nothing, nothing. I thoug for a moment—

OLAF [*shrieking with delight*]. Loo look, there are the rest of them, wi the horses and animals! And there a the Americans, too! All the sailo from the "Indian Girl"! [*The strai of "Yankee Doodle," played on a cla net and a drum, are heard.*]

HILMAR [*stopping his ears*]. Ug ugh, ugh!

ROR. I think we ought to withdr ourselves from sight a little, ladies; have nothing to do with such goin on. Let us go to our work again.

MRS. B. Do you think we had bet draw the curtains?

ROR. Yes, that was exactly what meant.

[*The ladies resume their places the work-table;* RORLUND *shuts verandah door, and draws the curta over it and over the windows, so t the room becomes half dark.*]

OLAF [*peeping out through the c tains*]. Mother, the manager's wife standing by the fountain now, washi her face.

MRS. B. What? In the middle of market-place?

MRS. R. And in broad daylight, t

HILMAR. Well, I must say if I w travelling across a desert waste found myself beside a well, I am s I should not stop to think whether Ugh, that frightful clarinet!

ROR. It is really high time the lice interfered.

BER. Oh no; we must not be too rd on foreigners. Of course these k have none of the deep-seated in-ncts of decency which restrain us hin proper bounds. Suppose they behave outrageously, what does it ncern us? Fortunately this spirit of order, that flies in the face of all t is customary and right, is abso-ely a stranger to our community, if nay say so—. What is this! [LONA SSEL *walks briskly in from the door the right.*]

THE LADIES [*in low, frightened es*]. The circus woman! The man-r's wife!

MRS. B. Heavens, what does this an!

MARTHA [*jumping up*]. Ah—!

LONA. How do you do, Betty dear! w do you do, Martha! How do you brother-in-law!

MRS. B. [*with a cry*]. Lona—!

BER. [*stumbling backwards*]. As e as I am alive—!

MRS. H. Mercy on us—!

MRS. R. It cannot possibly be—!

HILMAR. Well! Ugh!

MRS. B. Lona—! Is it really—?

ONA. Really me? Yes, indeed it is; may fall on my neck if you like.

HILMAR. Ugh, ugh!

MRS. B. And coming back here -?

MRS. B. And actually mean to ap-r in—?

ONA. Appear? Appear in what?

ER. Well, I mean—in the circus—

ONA. Ha, ha, ha! Are you mad, her-in-law. Do you think I belong he circus troupe? No; certainly I e turned my hand to a good many gs, and made a fool of myself in a l many ways—

MRS. R. Hm!—

LONA. But I have never tried circus riding.

BER. Then you are not—?

MRS. B. Thank Heaven!

LONA. No, we travelled like other respectable folk—second-class, certainly, but we are accustomed to that.

MRS. B. We, did you say?

BER. [*taking a step forward*]. Whom do you mean by "we"?

LONA. I and the child, of course.

THE LADIES [*with a cry*]. The child!

HILMAR. What!

ROR. I really must say—!

MRS. B. But what do you mean, Lona?

LONA. I mean John, of course; I have no other child, as far as I know, but John—or Johan, as you used to call him.

MRS. B. Johan!

MRS. R. [*in an undertone, to* MRS. LYNGE]. The scapegrace brother!

BER. [*hesitatingly*]. Is Johan with you?

LONA. Of course he is; I certainly would not come without him. Why do you look so tragical? And why are you sitting here in the gloom, sewing white things? There has not been a death in the family, has there?

ROR. Madam, you find yourself in the Society for Fallen Women—

LONA [*half to herself*]. What? Can these nice, quiet-looking ladies possibly be—?

MRS. R. Well, really—!

LONA. Oh, I understand! But, bless my soul, that is surely Mrs. Rummel? And Mrs. Holt sitting there too! Well, we three have not grown younger since the last time we met. But listen now, good people; let the Fallen Women

wait for a day—they will be none the worse for that. A joyful occasion like this—

ROR. A home-coming is not always a joyful occasion.

LONA. Indeed? How do you read your Bible, Mr. Parson?

ROR. I am not a parson.

LONA. Oh, you will grow into one, then. But—faugh!—this moral linen of yours smells tainted—just like a winding-sheet. I am accustomed to the air of the prairies, let me tell you.

BER. [*wiping his forehead*]. Yes, it certainly is rather close in here.

LONA. Wait a moment; we will resurrect ourselves from this vault. [*Pulls the curtains to one side.*] We must have broad daylight in here when the boy comes. Ah, you will see a boy then that has washed himself—

HILMAR. Ugh!

LONA [*opening the verandah door and window*]. I should say, *when* he has washed himself, up at the hotel—for on the boat he got piggishly dirty.

HILMAR. Ugh, ugh!

LONA. Ugh? Why, surely isn't that —? [*Points at* HILMAR *and asks the others:*] Is *he* still loafing about here saying "Ugh"?

HILMAR. I do not loaf; it is the state of my health that keeps me here.

ROR. Ahem! Ladies, I do not think—

LONA [*who has noticed* OLAF]. Is he yours, Betty? Give me a paw, my boy! Or are you afraid of your ugly old aunt?

ROR. [*putting his book under his arm*]. Ladies, I do not think any of us is in the mood for any more work to-day. I suppose we are to meet again tomorrow?

LONA [*while the others are getting up and taking their leave*]. Yes, I us. I shall be on the spot.

ROR. You? Pardon me, Miss Hess but what do you propose to do in o Society?

LONA. I will let some fresh air in it, Mr. Parson.

ACT II

SCENE.—*The same room.* MRS. BE NICK *is sitting alone at the wor table, sewing.* BERNICK *comes in fro the right, wearing his hat and glov and carrying a stick.*

MRS. B. Home already, Karsten?

BER. Yes, I have made an appoin ment with a man.

MRS. B. [*with a sigh*]. Oh! yes, suppose Johan is coming up here aga

BER. With a *man,* I said. [*La down his hat.*] What has become of the ladies to-day?

MRS. B. Mrs. Rummel and Hild hadn't time to come.

BER. Oh—did they send any e cuse?

MRS. B. Yes, they had so much do at home.

BER. Naturally. And of course t others are not coming either?

MRS. B. No, something has pr vented them today, too.

BER. I could have told you that, forehand. Where is Olaf?

MRS. B. I let him go out a little w Dina.

BER. H'm—she is a giddy little ba gage. Did you see how she at on started making a fuss of Johan y terday?

MRS. B. But, my dear Karsten, y know Dina knows nothing whate of—

BER. No, but in any case Joh ought to have had sufficient tact not

y her any attention. I saw quite ll, from his face, what Vigeland ought of it.

MRS. B. [*laying her sewing down on lap*]. Karsten, can you imagine at his object is in coming here?

BER. Well—I know he has a farm er there, and I fancy he is not doing rticularly well with it; *she* called at- tion yesterday to the fact that they re obliged to travel second class—

MRS. B. Yes, I am afraid it must be nething of that sort. But to think her coming with him! She! After deadly insult she offered you!

BER. Oh, don't think about that ient history.

MRS. B. How can I help thinking of ust now? After all, he is my brother till, it is not on his account that I distressed, but because of all the pleasantness it would mean for you. rsten, I am so dreadfully afraid—

BER. Afraid of what?

MRS. B. Isn't it possible that they y send him to prison for stealing t money from your mother?

BER. What rubbish! Who can prove t the money *was* stolen?

MRS. B. The whole town knows it, ortunately; and you know you said rself—

BER. I said nothing. The town knows ning whatever about the affair; the ple thing was no more than idle ru- ur.

MRS. B. How magnanimous you are, rsten!

BER. Do not let us have any more these reminiscences, please! You 't know how you torture me by rak- up all that. [*Walks up and down; flings his stick away from him.*] l to think of their coming home now—just now, when it is particularly necessary for me that I should stand well in every respect with the town and with the Press. Our newspaper men will be sending paragraphs to the papers in the other towns about here. Whether I receive them well, or whether I receive them ill, it will all be discussed and talked over. They will rake up all those old stories—as you do. In a community like ours—. [*Throws his gloves down on the table.*] And I have not a soul here to whom I can talk about it and to whom I can go for support.

MRS. B. No one at all, Karsten?

BER. No—who is there? And to have them on my shoulders just at this moment! Without a doubt they will create a scandal in some way or another—she, in particular. It is simply a calamity to be connected with such folk in any way!

MRS. B. Well, *I* can't help their—

BER. What can't you help? Their being your relations? No, that is quite true.

MRS. B. And I did not ask them to come home.

BER. That's it—go on! "I did not ask them to come home; I did not write to them; I did not drag them home by the hair of their heads!" Oh, I know the whole rigmarole by heart.

MRS. B. [*bursting into tears*]. You need not be so unkind—

BER. Yes, that's right—begin to cry, so that our neighbours may have that to gossip about too. Do stop being so foolish, Betty. Go and sit outside; some one may come in here. I don't suppose you want people to see the lady of the house with red eyes? It would be a nice thing, wouldn't it, if

the story got about that—. There, I hear some one in the passage. [*A knock is heard at the door.*] Come in! [MRS. BERNICK *takes her sewing and goes out down the garden steps.* AUNE *comes in from the right.*]

AUNE. Good-morning, Mr. Bernick.

BER. Good-morning. Well, I suppose you can guess what I want you for?

AUNE. Mr. Krap told me yesterday that you were not pleased with—

BER. I am displeased with the whole management of the yard, Aune. The work does not get on as quickly as it ought. The "Palm Tree" ought to have been under sail long ago. Mr. Vigeland comes here every day to complain about it; he is a difficult man to have with one as part owner.

AUNE. The "Palm Tree" can go to sea the day after to-morrow.

BER. At last. But what about the American ship, the "Indian Girl," which has been laid up here for five weeks and—

AUNE. The American ship? I understood that, before everything else, we were to work our hardest to get your own ship ready.

BER. I gave you no reason to think so. You ought to have pushed on as fast as possible with the work on the American ship also; but you have not.

AUNE. Her bottom is completely rotten, Mr. Bernick; the more we patch it, the worse it gets.

BER. That is not the reason. Krap has told me the whole truth. You do not understand how to work the new machines I have provided—or rather, you will not try to work them.

AUNE. Mr. Bernick, I am well on in the fifties; and ever since I was a boy I have been accustomed to the old wa of working—

BER. We cannot work that way nov a-days. You must not imagine, Aun that it is for the sake of making profi I do not need that, fortunately; but owe consideration to the community live in, and to the business I am at th head of. I must take the lead in pro ress, or there would never be any.

AUNE. I welcome progress too, M Bernick.

BER. Yes, for your own limited ci cle—for the working class. Oh, I kno what a busy agitator you are; yo make speeches, you stir people up; b when some concrete instance of pro ress presents itself—as now, in the ca of our machines—you do not want have anything to do with it; you a afraid.

AUNE. Yes, I really am afraid, M Bernick. I am afraid for the numb of men who will have the bread take out of their mouths by these machine You are very fond, sir, of talkin about the consideration we owe to t community; it seems to me, howeve that the community has its duties to Why should science and capital ve ture to introduce these new discoveri into labour, before the community h had time to educate a generation up using them?

BER. You read and think too muc Aune; it does you no good, and that what makes you dissatisfied with yo lot.

AUNE. It is not, Mr. Bernick; but cannot bear to see one good workm dismissed after another, to starve b cause of these machines.

BER. Hm! When the art of pri

was discovered, many a quill-driver
s reduced to starvation.

AUNE. Would you have admired the
so greatly if you had been a quill-
ver in those days, sir?

BER. I did not send for you to argue
h you. I sent for you to tell you
t the "Indian Girl" must be ready to
to sea the day after to-morrow.

AUNE. But, Mr. Bernick—

BER. The day after to-morrow, do
hear?—at the same time as our
n ship, not an hour later. I have
d reasons for hurrying on the work.
ve you seen to-day's paper? Well,
n you know the pranks these Amer-
n sailors have been up to again.
e rascally pack are turning the whole
n upside down. Not a night passes
hout some brawling in the taverns
the streets—not to speak of other
minations.

AUNE. Yes, they certainly are a bad

BER. And who is it that has to bear
blame for all this disorder? It is
Yes, it is I who have to suffer for
These newspaper fellows are mak-
all sorts of covert insinuations be-
se we are devoting all our energies
he "Palm Tree." I, whose task in
it is to influence my fellow-citizens
he force of example, have to endure
sort of thing cast in my face. I
not going to stand that. I have no
ey for having my good name
rched in that way.

UNE. Your name stands high
gh to endure that and a great deal
e, sir.

ER. Not just now. At this particu-
moment I have need of all the re-
t and goodwill my fellow-citizens
give me. I have a big undertaking
on the stocks, as you probably have heard; but, if it should happen that evil-disposed persons succeeded in shaking the absolute confidence I enjoy, it might land me in the greatest difficulties. That is why I want, at any price, to avoid these shameful innuendoes in the papers, and that is why I name the day after to-morrow as the limit of the time I can give you.

AUNE. Mr. Bernick, you might just as well name this afternoon as the limit.

BER. You mean that I am asking an impossibility?

AUNE. Yes, with the hands we have now at the yard.

BER. Very good; then we must look about elsewhere.

AUNE. Do you really mean, sir, to discharge still more of your old workmen?

BER. No, I am not thinking of that.

AUNE. Because I think it would cause bad blood against you both among the townsfolk and in the papers, if you did that.

BER. Very probably; therefore we will not do it. But, if the "Indian Girl" is not ready to sail the day after to-morrow, I shall discharge *you*.

AUNE [*with a start*]. Me! [*He laughs.*] You are joking, Mr. Bernick.

BER. I should not be so sure of that, if I were you.

AUNE. Do you mean that you can contemplate discharging *me*?—Me, whose father and grandfather worked in your yard all their lives, as I have done myself—?

BER. Who is it that is forcing me to do it?

AUNE. You are asking what is impossible, Mr. Bernick.

BER. Oh, where there's a will there's

a way. Yes or no; give me a decisive answer, or consider yourself discharged on the spot.

AUNE [*coming a step nearer to him*]. Mr. Bernick, have you ever realised what discharging an old workman means? You think he can look about for another job? Oh, yes, he can do that; but does that dispose of the matter? You should just be there once, in the house of a workman who has been discharged, the evening he comes home bringing all his tools with him.

BER. Do you think I am discharging you with a light heart? Have I not always been a good master to you?

AUNE. So much the worse, Mr. Bernick. Just for that very reason those at home will not blame *you;* they will say nothing to me, because they dare not; but they will look at me when I am not noticing, and think that I must have deserved it. You see, sir, that is—that is what I cannot bear. I am a mere nobody, I know; but I have always been accustomed to stand first in my own home. My humble home is a little community too, Mr. Bernick—a little community which I have been able to support and maintain because my wife has believed in me and because my children have believed in me. And now it is all to fall to pieces.

BER. Still, if there is nothing else for it, the lesser must go down before the greater; the individual must be sacrificed to the general welfare. I can give you no other answer; and that, and no other, is the way of the world. You are an obstinate man, Aune! You are opposing me, not because you cannot do otherwise, but because you will not exhibit the superiority of machinery over manual labour.

AUNE. And you will not be move Mr. Bernick, because you know that you drive me away you will at events have given the newspapers pro of your good will.

BER. And suppose that were so? have told you what it means for me either bringing the Press down on back, or making them well-disposed me at a moment when I am worki for an object which wil mean the vancement of the general welfare. W then, can I do otherwise than as I doing? The question, let me tell y turns upon this—whether your home to be supported, as you put it, whether hundreds of new homes are be prevented from existing—hundre of homes that will never be built, ne have a fire lighted on their hearth, less I succeed in carrying through scheme I am working for now. T is the reason why I have given your choice.

AUNE. Well, if that is the way thi stand, I have nothing more to say.

BER. Hm—my dear Aune, I am tremely grieved to think that we to part.

AUNE. We are not going to pa Mr. Bernick.

BER. How is that?

AUNE. Even a common man like n self has something he is bound to ma tain.

BER. Quite so, quite so—then I p sume you think you may promise—

AUNE. The "Indian Girl" shall ready to sail the day after to-morr [*Bows and goes out to the righ*

BER. Ah, I have got the better that obstinate fellow! I take it a good omen. [HILMAR *comes in thro the garden door, smoking a cigar.*]

HILMAR [*as he comes up the steps the verandah*]. Good-morning, tty! Good-morning, Karsten!

MRS. B. Good-morning.

HILMAR. Ah, I see you have been ing, so I suppose you know all about too?

MRS. B. Know all about what?

HILMAR. That the scandal is in full ng. Ugh!

BER. What do you mean?

HILMAR [*coming into the room*]. ıy, that our two friends from Amer- are displaying themselves about the eets in the company of Dina Dorf.

MRS. B. [*coming in after him*]. Hil- r, is it possible?

HILMAR. Yes, unfortunately, it is te true. Lona was even so wanting tact as to call after me, but of rse I appeared not to have heard .

BER. And no doubt all this has not n unnoticed.

HILMAR. You may well say that. ople stood still and looked at them. spread like wildfire through the n—just like a prairie fire out West. every house people were at the win- s waiting for the procession to pass, ek by jowl behind the curtains— ! Oh, you must excuse me, Betty, saying "ugh"—this has got on my ves. If it is going on, I shall be ed to think about getting right ıy from here.

MRS. B. But you should have spoken ıim and represented to him that—

HILMAR. In the open street? No ıse me, I could not do that. To ık that the fellow should dare to w himself in the town at all! Well, shall see if the Press doesn't put a stopper on him; yes—forgive me, Betty, but—

BER. The Press, do you say? Have you heard a hint of anything of the sort?

HILMAR. There *are* such things flying about. When I left here yesterday evening I looked in at the club, because I did not feel well. I saw at once, from the sudden silence that fell when I went in, that our American couple had been the subject of conversation. Then that impudent newspaper fellow, Hammer, came in and congratuated me at the top of his voice on the return of my rich cousin.

BER. Rich?

HILMAR. Those were his words. Naturally I looked him up and down in the manner he deserved, and gave him to understand that I knew nothing about Johan Tonnesen's being rich. "Really," he said, "that is very remarkable. People usually get on in America when they have something to start with, and I believe your cousin did not go over there quite empty-handed."

BER. Hm—now will you oblige me by—

MRS. B. [*distressed*]. There, you see, Karsten—

HILMAR. Anyhow, I have spent a sleepless night because of them. And here he is, walking about the streets as if nothing were the matter. Why couldn't he disappear for good and all? It really is insufferable how hard some people are to kill.

MRS. B. My dear Hilmar, what are you saying?

HILMAR. Oh, nothing. But here this fellow escapes with a whole skin from railway accidents and fights with California grizzlies and Blackfoot Indians

—has not even been scalped—. Ugh, here they come!

BER. [*looking down the street*]. Olaf is with them too!

HILMAR. Of course! They want to remind everybody that they belong to the best family in the town. Look there!—look at the crowd of loafers that have come out of the chemist's to stare at them and make remarks. My nerves really won't stand it; how a man is to be expected to keep the banner of the Ideal flying under such circumstances, I—

BER. They are coming here. Listen, Betty; it is my particular wish that you should receive them in the friendliest possible way.

MRS. B. Oh, may I, Karsten.

BER. Certainly, certainly—and you too, Hilmar. It is to be hoped they will not stay here very long; and when we are quite by ourselves—no allusions to the past; we must not hurt their feelings in any way.

MRS. B. How magnanimous you are, Karsten!

BER. Oh, don't speak of that.

MRS. B. But you must let me thank you; and you must forgive me for being so hasty. I am sure you had every reason to—

BER. Don't talk about it, please!

HILMAR. Ugh!

[JOHAN TONNESEN *and* DINA *come up through the garden, followed by* LONA *and* OLAF.]

LONA. Good-morning, dear people!

JOHAN. We have been out having a look round the old place, Karsten.

BER. So I hear. Greatly altered, is it not?

LONA. Mr. Bernick's great and good works everywhere. We have been up into the Recreation Ground you ha presented to the town—

BER. Have you been *there?*

LONA. "The gift of Karsten Be nick," as it says over the gatewa You seem to be responsible for t whole place here.

JOHAN. Splendid ships you ha got, too. I met my old schoolfello the captain of the "Palm Tree."

LONA. And you have built a n school-house too; and I hear that t town has to thank you for both t gas supply and the water supply.

BER. Well, one ought to work f the good of the community one liv in.

LONA. That is an excellent sen ment, brother-in-law; but it is a ple ure, all the same, to see how peo appreciate you. I am not vain, I hop but I could not resist reminding o or two of the people we talked to th we were relations of yours.

HILMAR. Ugh!

LONA. Do you say "ugh" to that

HILMAR. No, I said "ahem."

LONA. Oh, poor chap, you may s that if you like. But are you all yourselves to-day?

BER. Yes, we are by ourselves day.

LONA. Ah, yes, we met a couple members of your Morality Society at the market; they made out they w very busy. You and I have never h an opportunity for a good talk y Yesterday you had your three pione here, as well as the parson—

HILMAR. The schoolmaster.

LONA. I call him the parson. I now tell me what you think of work during these fifteen years? H n't he grown a fine fellow? W

uld recognise the madcap that ran ay from home?

HILMAR. Hm!

OHAN. Now, Lona, don't brag too ch about me.

ONA. Well, I can tell you I am cious proud of him. Goodness ws it is about the only thing I have e in my life; but it does give me rt of right to exist. When I think, an, how we two began over there h nothing but our four bare fists—

HILMAR. Hands.

ONA. I say fists; and they were y fists—

HILMAR. Ugh!

ONA. And empty, too.

HILMAR. Empty? Well, I must —

ONA. What must you say?

ER. Ahem!

HILMAR. I must say—ugh! [*Goes through the garden.*]

ONA. What is the matter with the ?

ER. Oh, do not take any notice of ; his nerves are rather upset just . Would you not like to take a at the garden? You have not been n there yet, and I have got an r to spare.

ONA. With pleasure. I can tell you thoughts have been with you in garden many and many a time.

RS. B. We have made a great y alterations there too, as you will [BERNICK, MRS. BERNICK *and A go down to the garden, where are visible every now and then ng the following scene.*]

LAF [*coming to the verandah door*]. le Hilmar, do you know what le Johan asked me? He asked me if uld go to America with him.

HILMAR. You, you duffer, who are tied to your mother's apron strings—!

OLAF. Ah, but I won't be that any longer. You will see, when I grow big—

HILMAR. Oh, fiddlesticks! You have no really serious bent towards the strength of character necessary to—.

[*They go down to the garden.* DINA *meawhile has taken off her hat and is standing at the door on the right, shaking the dust off her dress.*]

JOHAN [*to* DINA]. The walk has made you pretty warm.

DINA. Yes, it was a splendid walk. I have never had such a splendid walk before.

JOHAN. Do you not often go for a walk in the morning?

DINA. Oh, yes—but only with Olaf.

JOHAN. I see.—Would you rather go down into the garden than stay here?

DINA. No, I would rather stay here.

JOHAN. So would I. Then shall we consider it a bargain that we are to go for a walk like this together every morning?

DINA. No, Mr. Tonnesen, you mustn't do that.

JOHAN. What mustn't I do? You promised, you know.

DINA. Yes, but—on second thoughts —you mustn't go out with me.

JOHAN. But why not?

DINA. Of course you are a stranger —you cannot understand; but I must tell you—

JOHAN. Well?

DINA. No, I would rather not talk about it.

JOHAN. Oh, but you must; you can talk to me about whatever you like.

DINA. Well, I must tell you that I am not like the other young girls here.

There is something—something or other about me. That is why you mustn't.

JOHAN. But I do not understand anything about it. You have not done anything wrong?

DINA. No, not I, but—. No, I am not going to talk any more about it now. You will hear about it from the others, sure enough.

JOHAN. Hm!

DINA. But there is something else I want very much to ask you.

JOHAN. What is that?

DINA. I suppose it is easy to make a position for oneself over in America?

JOHAN. No, it is not always easy; at first you often have to rough it and work very hard.

DINA. I should be quite ready to do that.

JOHAN. You?

DINA. I can work now; I am strong and healthy; and Aunt Martha has taught me a lot.

JOHAN. Well, hang it, come back with us!

DINA. Ah, now you are only making fun of me; you said that to Olaf too. But what I wanted to know is if people are so very—so very moral over there?

JOHAN. Moral?

DINA. Yes; I mean are they as—as proper and as well-behaved as they are here?

JOHAN. Well, at all events they are not so bad as people here make out. You need not be afraid on that score.

DINA. You don't understand me. What I want to hear is just that they are *not* so proper and so moral.

JOHAN. Not? What would you wish them to be, then?

DINA. I would wish them to l natural.

JOHAN. Well, I believe that is ju what they are.

DINA. Because in that case I shou get on if I went there.

JOHAN. You would, for certain! and that is why you must come ba with us.

DINA. No, I don't want to go wi you; I must go alone. Oh, I wou make something of my life; I wou get on—

BER. [*speaking to* LONA *and his wi at the foot of the garden steps*]. W a moment—I will fetch it, Betty dea you might so easily catch cold. [*Com into the room and looks for his wif shawl.*]

MRS. B. [*from outside*]. You mu come out too, Johan; we are goi down to the grotto.

BER. No, I want Johan to stay he Look here, Dina; you take my wif shawl and go with them. Johan going to stay here with me, Bet dear. I want to hear how he is getti on over there.

MRS. B. Very well—then you w follow us; you know where you w find us. [MRS. BERNICK, LONA a DINA *go out through the garden, the left.* BERNICK *looks after th for a moment, then goes to the fartl door on the left and locks it, af which he goes up to* JOHAN, *gras both his hands, and shakes them war ly.*]

BER. Johan, now that we are alo you must let me thank you.

JOHAN. Oh, nonsense!

BER. My home and all the hap ness that it means to me—my positi

re as a citizen—all these I owe to
u.

JOHAN. Well, I am glad of it,
rsten; some good came of that mad
ry after all, then.

BER. [*grasping his hands again*].
t still you must let me thank you!
t one in ten thousand would have
ne what you did for me.

JOHAN. Rubbish! Weren't we, both
us, young and thoughtless? One of
had to take the blame, you know.

BER. But surely the guilty one was
proper one to do that?

JOHAN. Stop! At the moment the
ocent one happened to be the proper
e to do it. Remember, I had no
s—I was an orphan; it was a lucky
nce to get free from the drudgery
the office. You, on the other hand,
d your old mother still alive; and,
ides that, you had just become
retly engaged to Betty, who was
oted to you. What would have hap-
ed between you and her if it had
ne to her ears?

BER. That is true enough, but still—

JOHAN. And wasn't it just for
ty's sake that you broke off your
uaintance with Mrs. Dorf? Why, it
s merely in order to put an end
the whole thing that you were up
re with her that evening.

BER. Yes, that unfortunate evening
en that drunken creature came
ne! Yes, Johan, it was for Betty's
e; but, all the same, it was splendid
you to let all the appearances go
inst you, and to go away.

OHAN. Put your scruples to rest,
dear Karsten. We agreed that it
uld be so; you had to be saved, and
were my friend. I can tell you,
was uncommonly proud of that
friendship. Here was I, drudging away like a miserable stick-in-the mud, when you came back from your grand tour abroad, a great swell who had been to London and to Paris; and you chose me for your chum, although I was four years younger than you—it is true it was because you were courting Betty, I understand that now—but I *was* proud of it! Who would not have been? Who would not willingly sacrificed himself for you?—especially as it only meant a month's talk in the town, and enabled me to get away into the wide world.

BER. Ah, my dear Johan, I must be candid and tell you that the story is not so completely forgotten yet.

JOHAN. Isn't it? Well, what does that matter to me, once I am back over there on my farm again?

BER. Then you mean to go back?

JOHAN. Of course.

BER. But not immediately, I hope?

JOHAN. As soon as possible. It was only to humour Lona that I came over with her, you know.

BER. Really? How so?

JOHAN. Well, you see, Lona is no longer young, and lately she began to be obsessed with home-sickness; but she never would admit it. [*Smiles.*] How could she venture to risk leaving such a flighty fellow as me alone, who before I was nineteen had been mixed up in—

BER. Well, what then?

JOHAN. Well, Karsten, now I am coming to a confession that I am ashamed to make.

BER. You surely haven't confided the truth to her?

JOHAN. Yes. It was wrong of me, but I could not do otherwise. You can

have no conception what Lona has been to me. You never could put up with her; but she has been like a mother to me. The first year we were out there, when things went so badly with us, you have no idea how she worked! And when I was ill for a long time, and could earn nothing and could not prevent her, she took to singing ballads in taverns, and gave lectures that people laughed at; and then she wrote a book that she has both laughed and cried over since then—all to keep the life in me. Could I look on when in the winter she, who had toiled and drudged for me, began to pine away? No, Karsten, I couldn't. And so I said, "You go home for a trip, Lona; don't be afraid for me, I am not so flighty as you think." And so —the end of it was that she had to know.

BER. And how did she take it?

JOHAN. Well, she thought, as was true, that as I knew I was innocent nothing need prevent me from taking a trip over here with her. But make your mind easy; Lona will let nothing out, and I shall keep my mouth shut as I did before.

BER. Yes, yes—I rely on that.

JOHAN. Here is my hand on it. And now we will say no more about that old story; luckily it is the only mad prank either of us has been guilty of, I am sure. I want thoroughly to enjoy the few days I shall stay here. You cannot think what a delightful walk we had this morning. Who would have believed that that little imp, who used to run about here and play angels' parts on the stage—! But tell me, my dear fellow, what became of her parents afterwards?

BER. Oh, my boy, I can tell you r more than I wrote to you immediate after you went away. I suppose yo got my two letters?

JOHAN. Yes, yes, I have them bot So that drunken fellow deserted her

BER. And drank himself to dea afterwards.

JOHAN. And *she* died soon afte wards, too?

BER. She was proud; she betray nothing, and would accept nothing.

JOHAN. Well, at all events you d the right thing by taking Dina in your house.

BER. I suppose so. As a matt of fact it was Martha that broug that about.

JOHAN. So it was Martha? By th way, where is she to-day?

BER. She? Oh, when she hasn't h school to look after, she has her si people to see to.

JOHAN. So it was Martha who i terested herself in her.

BER. Yes, you know Martha has a ways had a certain liking for teachin so she took a post in the Board-scho It was very ridiculous of her.

JOHAN. I thought she looked ve worn yesterday; I should be afra her health was not good enough f it.

BER. Oh, as far as her health go it is all right enough. But it is unple sant for me; it looks as though I, h brother, were not willing to suppo her.

JOHAN. Support her? I thoug she had means enough of her own.

BER. Not a penny. Surely you member how badly off our mother w when you went away? She carr things on for a time with my ass

nce, but naturally I could not put
with that state of affairs perma-
ntly. I made her take me into the
m, but even then things did not go
ll. So I had to take the whole busi-
ss myself, and when we made up
r balance-sheet it became evident
at there was practically nothing left
my mother's share. And when
ther died soon afterwards, of course
artha was left penniless.

JOHAN. Poor Martha!

BER. Poor! You surely do not sup-
se I let her want for anything? No,
venture to say I am a good brother.
course she has a home here with
; her salary as a teacher is more
an enough for her to dress on; what
re could she want?

JOHAN. Hm—that is not our idea
things in America.

BER. No, I dare say not—in such
revolutionary state of society, as you
d there. But in our small circle—
which, thank God, depravity has
t gained a footing, up to now at all
ents—women are content to occupy
seemly, as well as modest, position.
reover, it is Martha's own fault; I
an, she might have been provided
r long ago, if she had wished.

JOHAN. You mean she might have
rried?

BER. Yes, and married very well,
. She has had several good offers—
riously enough, when you think that
e is a poor girl, no longer young,
d, besides, quite an insignificant
rson.

JOHAN. Insignificant?

BER. Oh, I am not blaming her for
t. I most certainly would not wish
otherwise. I can tell you it is al-
ys a good thing to have a steady-
going person like that in a big house like this—some one you can rely on in any contingency.

JOHAN. Yes, but what does *she*—?

BER. She? How? Oh! well, of course *she* has plenty to interest herself in; she has Betty and Olaf and me. People should not think first of themselves—women least of all. We have all got some community, great or small, to work for. That is my principle, at all events. [*Points to* KRAP, *who has come in from the right.*] Ah, here is an example of it, ready to hand. Do you suppose that it is my own affairs that are absorbing me just now? By no means. [*Eagerly to* KRAP.] Well?

KRAP [*in an undertone, showing him a bundle of papers*]. Here are all the sale contracts, completed.

BER. Capital! Splendid!—Well, Johan, you must really excuse me for the present. [*In a low voice, grasping his hand.*] Thanks, Johan, thanks! And rest assured that anything I can do for you—. Well, of course you understand. Come along, Krap. [*They go into* BERNICK'S *room.*]

JOHAN [*looking after them for a moment.*] Hm!—[*Turns to go down to the garden. At the same moment* MARTHA *comes in from the right, with a little basket over her arm.*] Martha!

MARTHA. Ah, Johan—is it you?

JOHAN. Out so early?

MARTHA. Yes. Wait a moment; the others are just coming. [*Moves towards the door on the left.*]

JOHAN. Martha, are you always in such a hurry?

MARTHA. I?

JOHAN. Yesterday you seemed to avoid me, so that I never managed

to have a word with you—we two old playfellows.

MARTHA. Ah, Johan; that is many, many years ago.

JOHAN. Good Lord—why, it is only fifteen years ago, no more and no less. Do you think I have changed so much?

MARTHA. You? Oh! yes, you have changed too, although—

JOHAN. What do you mean?

MARTHA. Oh, nothing.

JOHAN. You do not seem to be very glad to see me again.

MARTHA. I have waited so long, Johan—too long.

JOHAN. Waited? For me to come?

MARTHA. Yes.

JOHAN. And why did you think I would come?

MARTHA. To atone for the wrong you had done.

JOHAN. I?

MARTHA. Have you forgotten that it was through you that a woman died in need and in shame? Have you forgotten that it was through you that the best years of a young girl's life were embittered?

JOHAN. And you can say such things to me? Martha, has your brother never—?

MARTHA. Never what?

JOHAN. Has he never—oh, of course, I mean has he never so much as said a word in my defence?

MARTHA. Ah, Johan, you know Karsten's high principles.

JOHAN. Hm—! Oh, of course; I know my old friend Karsten's high principles! But really this is—. Well, well. I was having a talk with him just now. He seems to me to have altered considerably.

MARTHA. How can you say that? I am sure Karsten has always been a excellent man.

JOHAN. Yes, that was not exactl what I meant—but never mind. Hm Now I understand the light you hav seen me in; it was the return of th prodigal that you were waiting for.

MARTHA. Johan, I will tell yo what light I have seen you in. [*Point down to the garden.*] Do you see tha girl playing on the grass down ther with Olaf? That is Dina. Do you re member that incoherent letter yo wrote me when you went away? Yo asked me to believe in you. I hav believed in you, Johan. All the ho rible things that were rumoured abou you after you had gone must hav been done through being led astray- from thoughtlessness, without premed tation.

JOHAN. What do you mean?

MARTHA. Oh, you understand m well enough—not a word more of tha But of course you had to go awa and begin afresh—a new life. You duties here which you never remem bered to undertake—or never wer able to undertake—I have undertake for you. I tell you this, so that yo shall not have that also to reproac yourself with. I have been a moth to that much-wronged child; I hav brought her up as well as I was able.

JOHAN. And have wasted your who life for that reason.

MARTHA. It has not been waste But you have come late, Johan.

JOHAN. Martha—if only I cou tell you—. Well, at all events let m thank you for your loyal friendshi

MARTHA [*with a sad smile*]. Hm.- Well, we have had it out now, Joha Hush, some one is coming. Good-by

can't stay now. [*Goes out through e farther door on the left.* LONA *mes in from the garden, followed by* RS. BERNICK.]

MRS. B. But, good gracious, Lona— iat are you thinking of?

LONA. Let me be, I tell you! I ist and will speak to him.

MRS. B. But it would be a scandal the worst sort! Ah, Johan—still re?

LONA. Out with you, my boy; don't ay here indoors; go down into the rden and have a chat with Dina.

JOHAN. I was just thinking of do- so.

MRS. B. But—

LONA. Look here, Johan—have you d a good look at Dina?

JOHAN. I should think so!

LONA. Well, look at her to some rpose, my boy. That would be some- dy for *you!*

MRS. B. But, Lona!

JOHAN. Somebody for me?

LONA. Yes, to look at, I mean. Be with you!

JOHAN. Oh, I don't need any press- . [*Goes down into the garden.*]

MRS. B. Lona, you astound me! u cannot possibly be serious about

LONA. Indeed I am. Isn't she sweet d healthy and honest? She is exactly wife for Johan. She is just what needs over there; it will be a change m an old step-sister.

MRS. B. Dina? Dina Dorf? But nk—

LONA. I think first and foremost the boy's happiness. Because, help I must; he has not much idea of t sort of thing; he has never had ch of an eye for girls or women.

MRS. B. He? Johan? Indeed I think we have had only too sad proofs that—

LONA. Oh, devil take all those stupid stories! Where is Karsten? I mean to speak to him.

MRS. B. Lona, you must not do it, I tell you!

LONA. I am going to. If the boy takes a fancy to her—and she to him —then they shall make a match of it. Karsten is such a clever man, he must find some way to bring it about.

MRS. B. And do you think these American indecencies will be permitted here?

LONA. Bosh, Betty!

MRS. B. Do you think a man like Karsten, with his strictly moral way of thinking—

LONA. Pooh! he is not so terribly moral.

MRS. B. What have you the audacity to say?

LONA. I have the audacity to say that Karsten is not any more particularly moral than anybody else.

MRS. B. So you still hate him as deeply as that! But what are you doing here, if you have never been able to forget that? I cannot understand how you dare look him in the face after the shameful insult you put upon him in the old days.

LONA. Yes, Betty, that time I did forget myself badly.

MRS. B. And to think how magnanimously he has forgiven you—he, who had never done any wrong! It was not *his* fault that you encouraged yourself with hopes. But since then you have always hated me too. [*Bursts into tears.*] You have always grudged me my good fortune. And now you

come here to heap all this on my head—to let the whole town know what sort of a family I have brought Karsten into. Yes, it is me that it all falls upon, and that is what you want. Oh, it is abominable of you! [*Goes out by the door on the left, in tears.*]

LONA [*looking after her*]. Poor Betty! [BERNICK *comes in from his room. He stops at the door to speak to* KRAP.]

BER. Yes, that is excellent, Krap—capital! Send twenty pounds to the fund for dinners to the poor. [*Turns round.*] Lona! [*Comes forward.*] Are you alone? Is Betty not coming in?

LONA. No. Would you like me to call her?

BER. No, no—not at all. Oh, Lona, you don't know how anxious I have been to speak openly to you—after having begged for your forgiveness.

LONA. Look here, Karsten—do not let us be sentimental; it doesn't suit us.

BER. You *must* listen to me, Lona. I know only too well how much appearances are against me, as you have learnt all about that affair with Dina's mother. But I swear to you that it was only a temporary infatuation; I was really, truly and honestly, in love with you once.

LONA. Why do you think I have come home?

BER. Whatever you have in your mind, I entreat you to do nothing until I have exculpated myself. I can do that, Lona! at all events I can excuse myself.

LONA. Now you are frightened. You once were in love with me, you say. Yes, you told me that often enough in your letters; and perhaps it was true, too—in a way—as long as you were living out in the great, free world which gave you the courage to think freely and greatly. Perhaps you found in me a little more character and strength of will and independence than in most of the folk at home here. And then we kept it secret between us; nobody could make fun of your bad taste.

BER. Lona, how can you think—?

LONA. But when you came back—when you heard the gibes that were made at me on all sides—when you noticed how people laughed at what they called my absurdities—

BER. You *were* regardless of people's opinion at that time.

LONA. Chiefly to annoy the petticoated and trousered prudes that one met at every turn in the town. And then, when you met that seductive young actress—

BER. It was a boyish escapade—nothing more; I swear to you that there was no truth in a tenth part of the rumours and gossip that went about.

LONA. Maybe. But then, when Betty came home—a pretty young girl idolised by every one—and it became known that she would inherit all her aunt's money and that I would have nothing—

BER. That is just the point, Lona, and now you shall have the truth without any beating about the bush. I did not love Betty then; I did not break off my engagement with you because of any new attachment. It was entirely for the sake of the money. I needed it; I *had* to make sure of it.

LONA. And you have the face to tell me that?

BER. Yes, I have. Listen, Lona.

LONA. And yet you wrote to me
at an unconquerable passion for
etty had overcome you—invoked my
agnanimity—begged me, for Betty's
ke, to hold my tongue about all that
d been between us.

BER. I *had* to, I tell you.

LONA. Now, by Heaven, I don't
gret that I forgot myself as I did
at time!

BER. Let me tell you the plain
uth of how things stood with me
en. My mother, as you remember,
as at the head of the business, but
e was absolutely without any busi-
ss ability whatever. I was hurriedly
mmoned home from Paris; times
ere critical, and they relied on me to
t things straight. What did I find?
found—and you must keep this a
rofound secret—a house on the brink
ruin. Yes—as good as on the brink
ruin, this old respected house which
d seen three generations of us. What
se could I—the son, the only son—
than look about for some means
saving it?

LONA. And so you saved the house
Bernick at the cost of a woman.

BER. You know quite well that
etty was in love with me.

LONA. But what about me?

BER. Believe me, Lona, you would
ver have been happy with me.

LONA. Was it out of consideration
r my happiness that you sacrificed
e.

BER. Do you suppose I acted as I
d from selfish motives? If I had
od alone, then, I would have begun
over again with cheerful courage.
t you do not understand how the
e of a man of business, with his tre-
endous responsibilities, is bound up with that of the business which falls to his inheritance. Do you realise that the prosperity or the ruin of hundreds —or thousands—depends on him? Can you not take into consideration the fact that the whole community in which both you and I were born would have been affected to the most dangerous extent if the house of Bernick had gone to smash?

LONA. Then is it for the sake of the community that you have maintained your position these fifteen years upon a lie?

BER. Upon a lie?

LONA. What does Betty know of all this that underlies her union with you?

BER. Do you suppose that I would hurt her feelings to no purpose by disclosing the truth?

LONA. To no purpose, you say? Well, well—you are a man of business; you ought to understand what is to the purpose. But listen to me, Karsten— *I* am going to speak the plain truth now. Tell me, are you really happy?

BER. In my family life, do you mean?

LONA. Yes.

BER. I am, Lona. You have not been a self-sacrificing friend to me in vain. I can honestly say that I have grown happier every year. Betty is good and willing; and if I were to tell you how, in the course of years, she has learnt to model her character on the lines of my own—

LON. Hm!

BER. At first, of course, she had a whole lot of romantic notions about love; she could not reconcile herself

to the idea that, little by little, it must change into a quiet comradeship.

LONA. But now she is quite reconciled to that?

BER. Absolutely. As you can imagine, daily intercourse with me has had no small share in developing her character. Every one, in their degree, has to learn to lower their own pretensions, if they are to live worthily of the community to which they belong. And Betty, in her turn, has gradually learnt to understand this; and that is why our home is now a model to our fellow-citizens.

LONA. But your fellow-citizens know nothing about the lie?

BER. The lie?

LONA. Yes—the lie you have persisted in for these fifteeen years.

BER. Do you mean to say that you call that—?

LONA. I call it a lie—a three-fold lie; first of all three is the lie towards me, then the lie towards Betty, and then the lie towards Johan.

BER. Betty has never asked me to speak.

LONA. Because she has known nothing.

BER. And *you* will not demand it—out of consideration for her.

LONA. Oh, no—I shall manage to put up with their gibes well enough; I have broad shoulders.

BER. And Johan will not demand it either; he has promised me that.

LONA. But you yourself, Karsten? Do you feel within yourself no impulse urging you to shake yourself free of this lie?

BER. Do you suppose that of my own free will I would sacrifice my family happiness and my position i the world?

LONA. What right have you to th position you hold?

BER. Every day during these fiftee years I have earned some little righ to it—by my conduct, and by wha I have achieved by my work.

LONA. True, you have achieved great deal by your work, for yoursel as well as for others. You are th richest and most influential man in th town; nobody in it dares do otherwis than defer to your will, because yo are looked upon as a man without spot or blemish; your home is regarde as a model home, and your conduct a a model of conduct. But all thi grandeur, and you with it, is founde on a treacherous morass. A momer may come and a word may be spoke —and you and all your grandeur wi be engulfed in the morass, if you d not save yourself in time.

BER. Lona—what is your object i coming here?

LONA. I want to help you to g firm ground under your feet, Karste

BER. Revenge!—you want to r venge yourself! I suspected it. B you won't succeed! There is only o person here that can speak wi authority, and he will be silent.

LONA. You mean Johan?

BER. Yes, Johan. If any one el accuses me, I shall deny everythin If any one tries to crush me, I sha fight for my life. But you will nev succeed in that, let me tell you! T one who could strike me down will s nothing—and is going away.

[RUMMEL *and* VIGELAND *come from the right.*]

RUM. Good-morning, my dear Be

k, good-morning. You must come with us to the Commercial Associa-n. There is a meeting about the lway scheme, you know.

BER. I cannot. It is impossible t now.

VIG. You really must, Mr. Bernick.

RUM. Bernick, you must. There is opposition to us on foot. Hammer, l the rest of those who believe in a e along the coast, are declaring t private interests are at the back the new proposals.

BER. Well, then, explain to them—

VIG. Our explanations have no ef-t, Mr. Bernick.

RUM. No, no, you must come your-f. Naturally, no one would dare sus-t you of such duplicity.

LONA. I should think not.

BER. I cannot, I tell you; I am not l. Or, at all events, wait—let me l myself together. [RORLUND *comes from the right.*]

ROR. Excuse me, Mr. Bernick, but m terribly upset.

BER. Why what is the matter with ?

ROR. I must put a question to you, Bernick. Is it with your consent t the young girl who has found a lter under your roof shows herself he open street in the company of erson who—

ONA. What person, Mr. Parson?

OR. With the person from whom, all others in the world, she ought e kept farthest apart!

ONA. Ha! ha!

OR. Is it with your consent, Mr. nick?

ER. [*looking for his hat and es*]. I know nothing about it. You t excuse me; I am in a great hurry. I am due at the Commercial Association.

[HILMAR *comes up from the garden and goes over to the farthest door on the left.*]

HILMAR. Betty, Betty, I want to speak to you.

MRS. B. [*coming to the door*]. What is it?

HILMAR. You ought to go down into the garden and put a stop to the flirtation that is going on between a certain person and Dina Dorf! It has quite got on my nerves to listen to them.

LONA. And what has the certain person been saying!

HILMAR. Oh, only that he wishes she would go off to America with him. Ugh!

ROR. Is it possible?

MRS. B. What do you say?

LONA. But that would be perfectly splendid!

BER. Impossible! You cannot have heard aright.

HILMAR. Ask him yourself, then. Here comes the pair of them. Only, leave me out of it, please.

BER. [*To* RUMMEL *and* VIGELAND]. I will follow you—in a moment. [RUMMEL *and* VIGELAND *go out to the right.* JOHAN *and* DINA *come up from the garden.*]

JOHAN. Hurrah, Lona, she is going with us!

MRS. B. But, Johan—are you out of your senses?

ROR. Can I believe my ears! Such an atrocious scandal! By what arts of seduction have you—?

JOHAN. Come, come, sir—what are you saying?

ROR. Answer me, Dina; do you

mean to do this—entirely of your own free will?

DINA. I must get away from here.

ROR. But with *him!*—with *him!*

DINA. Can you tell me of any one else here who would have the courage to take me with him?

ROR. Very well then—you shall learn who he is.

JOHAN. Do not speak!

BER. Not a word more!

ROR. If I did not, I should be unworthy to serve a community of whose morals I have been appointed a guardian, and should be acting most unjustifiably towards this young girl, in whose upbringing I have taken a material part, and who is to me—

JOHAN. Take care what you are doing!

ROR. She *shall* know! Dina, this is the man who was the cause of all your mother's misery and shame.

BER. Mr. Rorlund—?

DINA. He! [*To* JOHAN.] Is this true?

JOHAN. Karsten, you answer.

BER. Not a word more! Do not let us say another word about it to-day.

DINA. Then it is true.

ROR. Yes, it is true. And more than that—this fellow, whom you were going to trust, did not run away from home empty-handed; ask him about old Mrs. Bernick's cash-box—Mr. Bernick can bear witness to that!

LONA. Liar!

BER. Ah!—

MRS. B. My God! my God!

JOHAN [*rushing at* RORLUND *with uplifted arm*]. And you dare to—

LONA [*restraining him*]. Do not strike him, Johan!

ROR. That is right, assault me! But the truth will out; and it *is* th truth—Mr. Bernick has admitted i and the whole town knows it. Nov Dina, you know him. [*A short silence.*

JOHAN [*softly, grasping* BERNICK *b* the arm]. Karsten, Karsten, what hav you done?

MRS. B. [*in tears*]. Oh, Karste to think that I should have mixed yo up in all this disgrace!

SANDSTAD [*coming in hurriedly fro the right, and calling out, with h hand still on the door-handle*]. Yo positively *must* come now, Mr. Bernic The fate of the whole railway is hang ing by a thread.

BER. [*abstractedly*]. What is it What have I to—

LONA [*earnestly and with emphasis* You have to go and be a pillar o society, brother-in-law.

SAN. Yes, come along; we need th full weight of your moral excellen on our side.

JOHAN [*aside, to* BERNICK]. Ka sten, we will have a talk about this t morrow. [*Goes out through the garde* BERNICK, *looking half dazed, goes o to the right with* SANDSTAD.]

ACT III

SCENE—*The same room.* BERNIC *with a cane in his hand and evident in a great rage, comes out of th farthest room on the left, leaving t door half-open behind him.*

BER. [*speaking to his wife, who in the other room*]. There! I ha given it him in earnest now; I do think he will forget that thrashin What do you say?—And *I* say th you are an injudicious mother! Y make excuses for him, and countenan any sort of rascality on his part. Not rascality? What do you call

en? Slipping out of the house at ght, going out in a fishing boat, ying away till well on in the day, d giving me such a horrible fright en I have so much to worry me! ıd then the young scamp has the dacity to threaten that he will run ay! Just let him try it!—You? , very likely; you don't trouble urself much about what happens to n. I really believe that if he were led—! Oh, really? Well, *I* have rk to leave behind me in the world; ıave no fancy for being left child- s.—Now, do not raise objections, tty; it shall be as I say—he is con- ed to the house. [*Listens.*] Hush; not let any one notice anything. RAP *comes in from the right.*]

KRAP. Can you spare me a moment, . Bernick?

BER. [*throwing away the cane*]. rtainly, certainly. Have you come m the yard?

KRAP. Yes. Ahem—!

BER. Well? Nothing wrong with "Palm Tree," I hope?

KRAP. The "Palm Tree" can sail morrow, but—

BER. Is it the "Indian Girl," then? ad a suspicion that that obstinate ow—

KRAP. The "Indian Girl" can sail morrow, too; but I am sure that will not get very far.

BER. What do you mean?

KRAP. Excuse me, sir; that door is ıding ajar, and I think there is ıe one in the other room—

BER. [*shutting the door*]. There, ı! But what is this that no one must hear?

KRAP. Just this—that I believe ıe intends to let the "Indian Girl" go to the bottom with every mother's son on board.

BER. Good God!—what makes you think that?

KRAP. I cannot account for it any other way, sir.

BER. Well, tell me as briefly as you can—

KRAP. I will. You know yourself how slowly the work has gone on in the yard since we got the new machines and the new inexperienced hands?

BER. Yes, yes.

KRAP. But this morning, when I went down there, I noticed that the repairs to the American boat had made extraordinary progress; the great hole in the bottom—the rotten patch, you know—

BER. Yes, yes—what about it?

KRAP. Was completely repaired—to all appearance, at any rate—covered up—looked as good as new. I heard that Aune himself had been working at it by lantern light the whole night.

BER. Yes, yes—well?

KRAP. I turned it over in my head for a bit; the hands were away at their breakfast, so I found an opportunity to have a look round the boat, both outside and in, without any one's seeing me. I had a job to get down to the bottom through the cargo, but I learnt the truth. There is something very suspicious going on, Mr. Bernick.

BER. I cannot believe it, Krap. I cannot and will not believe such a thing of Aune.

KRAP. I am very sorry—but it is the simple truth. Something very suspicious is going on. No new timbers put in, as far as I could see, only stopped up and tinkered at, and covered over with sailcloth and tarpaulins

and that sort of thing—an absolute fraud. The "Indian Girl" will never get to New York; she will go to the bottom like a cracked pot.

BER. This is most horrible! But what can be his object, do you suppose?

KRAP. Probably he wants to bring the machines into discredit—wants to take his revenge—wants to force you to take the old hands on again.

BER. And to do this he is willing to sacrifice the lives of all on board.

KRAP. He said the other day that there were no men on board the "Indian Girl"—only wild beasts.

BER. Yes, but—apart from that—has he no regard for the great loss of capital it would mean?

KRAP. Aune does not look upon capital with a very friendly eye, Mr. Bernick.

BER. That is perfectly true; he is an agitator and a fomenter of discontent; but such an unscrupulous thing as this—. Look here, Krap; you must look into the matter once more. Not a word of it to any one. The blame will fall on our yard if any one hears anything of it.

KRAP. Of course, but—

BER. When the hands are away at their dinner you must manage to get down there again; I must have absolute certainty about it.

KRAP. You shall, sir; but, excuse me, what do you propose to do?

BER. Report the affair, naturally. We cannot, of course, let ourselves become accomplices in such a crime. I could not have such a thing on my conscience. Moreover, it will make a good impression, both on the Press and on the public in general, if it is seen that I set all personal interests aside an let justice take its course.

KRAP. Quite true, Mr. Bernick.

BER. But first of all I must be a solutely certain. And meanwhile, not breathe a word of it—

KRAP. Not a word, sir. And yo shall have your certainty. [*Goes o through the garden and down t street.*]

BER. [*half aloud*]. Shocking!—B no, it is impossible!—inconceivable!

[*As he turns to go into his roo* HILMAR *comes in from the right.*]

HILMAR. Good morning, Karste Let me congratulate you on yo triumph at the Commercial Associati yesterday.

BER. Thank you.

HILMAR. It was a brilliant triump I hear; the triumph of intelligent pu lic spirit over selfishness and prejudi —something like a raid of Fren troops on the Kabyles. It is, astonis ing that after that unpleasant sce here, you could—

BER. Yes, yes—quite so.

HILMAR. But the decisive battle h not been fought yet.

BER. In the matter of the railwa do you mean?

HILMAR. Yes; I suppose you kn the trouble that Hammer is brewing?

BER. [*anxiously*]. No, what is tha

HILMAR. Oh, he is greatly taken with the rumour that is going rou and is preparing to dish up an arti about it.

BER. What rumour?

HILMAR. About the extensive pu chase of property along the brar line, of course.

BER. What? Is there such rumour as that going about?

HILMAR. It is all over the town. I ard it at the club when I looked in ere. They say that one of our law-rs has quietly bought up, on com-ssion, all the forest land, all the ning land, all the waterfalls—

BER. Don't they say whom it was ?

HILMAR. At the club they thought must be for some company, not con-ected with this town, that has got a t of the scheme you have in hand, d has made haste to buy before the ce of these properties went up. 't it villainous—ugh!

BER. Villainous?

HILMAR. Yes, to have strangers put-g their fingers into our pie—and e of our own local lawyers lending nself to such a thing! And now it l be outsiders that will get all the fits!

BER. But, after all, it is only an idle nour.

HILMAR. Meanwhile people are be-ing it, and tomorrow or next day I e no doubt Hammer will nail it to counter as a fact. There is a neral sense of exasperation in the n already. I heard several people that if the rumour were confirmed y would take their names off the scription lists.

BER. Impossible!

HILMAR. Is it? Why do you sup-e these mercenary-minded creatures e so willing to go into the under-ing with you? Don't you suppose y have scented profit for them-es—

BER. It is impossible, I am sure; re is so much public spirit in our e community—

HILMAR. In our community? Of course you are a confirmed optimist, and so you judge others by yourself. But I, who am a tolerably experienced observer—! There isn't a single soul in the place—excepting ourselves, of course—not a single soul in the place who holds up the banner of the Ideal. [*Goes towards the verandah.*] Ugh, I can see them there!

BER. See whom?

HILMAR. Our two friends from America. [*Looks out to the right.*] And who is that they are walking with? As I am alive, if it is not the captain of the "Indian Girl." Ugh!

BER. What can they want with *him?*

HILMAR. Oh, he is just the right company for them. He looks as if he had been a slave-dealer or a pirate; and who knows what the other two may have been doing all these years.

BER. Let me tell you that it is grossly unjust to think such things about them.

HILMAR. Yes—you are an optimist. But here they are, bearing down upon us again; so I will get away while there is time. [*Goes towards the door on the left.* LONA *comes in from the right.*]

LONA. Oh, Hilmar, am I driving you away?

HILMAR. Not at all; I am in rather a hurry; I want to have a word with Betty. [*Goes into the farthest room on the left.*]

BER. [*after a moment's silence*]. Well, Lona?

LONA. Yes?

BER. What do you think of me to-day?

LONA. The same as I did yesterday. A lie more or less—

BER. I must enlighten you about it. Where has Johan gone?

LONA. He is coming; he had to see a man first.

BER. After what you heard yesterday, you will understand that my whole life will be ruined if the truth comes to light.

LONA. I can understand that.

BER. Of course, it stands to reason that *I* was not guilty of the crime there was so much talk about here.

LONA. That stands to reason. But who was the thief?

BER. There was no thief. There was no money stolen—not a penny.

LONA. How is that?

BER. Not a penny, I tell you.

LONA. But those rumours? How did that shameful rumour get about that Johan—

BER. Lona, I think I can speak to you as I could to no one else. I will conceal nothing from you. *I* was partly to blame for spreading the rumour.

LONA. You? You could act in that way towards a man who for your sake—!

BER. Do not condemn me without bearing in mind how things stood at that time. I told you about it yesterday. I came home and found my mother involved in a mesh of injudicious undertakings; we had all manner of bad luck—it seemed as if misfortunes were raining upon us, and our house was on the verge of ruin. I was half reckless and half in despair. Lona, I believe it was mainly to deaden my thoughts that I let myself drift into that entanglement that ended in Johan's going away.

LONA. Hm—

BER. You can well imagine how every kind of rumour was set on fo after he and you had gone. Peop began to say that it was not his fir piece of folly—that Dorf had receiv a large sum of money to hold h tongue and go away; other people sa that she had received it. At the sam time it was obvious that our house w finding it difficult to meet its oblig tions. What was more natural tha that scandal-mongers should find son connection between these two rumours And as the woman remained here, li ing in poverty, people declared that had taken the money with him America; and every time rumour me tioned the sum, it grew larger.

LONA. And you, Karsten—?

BER. I grasped at the rumour li a drowning man at a straw.

LONA. You helped to spread it?

BER. I did not contradict it. O creditors had begun to be pressing, a I had the task of keeping them qui The result was the dissipating of a suspicion as to the stability of t firm; people said that we had been h by a temporary piece of ill-luck—th all that was necessary was that th should not press us—only give us ti and every creditor would be paid full.

LONA. And every creditor was pa in full?

BER. Yes, Lona, that rumour sav our house and made me the man now am.

LONA. That is to say, a lie has ma you the man you now are.

BER. Whom did it injure at t time? It was Johan's intention ne to come back.

LONA. You ask whom it injur

ok into your own heart, and tell me
t has not injured you.

BER. Look into any man's heart you
ase, and you will always find, in
ry one, at least one black spot which
has to keep concealed.

LONA. And you call yourselves pil-
s of society!

BER. Society has none better.

LONA. And of what consequence is
whether such a society be propped
or not? What does it all consist
Show and lies—and nothing else.
re are you, the first man in the
n, living in grandeur and luxury,
verful and respected — you, who
e branded an innocent man as a
minal.

BER. Do you suppose I am not
ply conscious of the wrong I have
e him? And do you suppose I am
ready to make amends to him for

LONA. How? By speaking out?

BER. Would you have the heart to
st on that?

LONA. What else can make amends
such a wrong?

BER. I am rich, Lona; Johan can
and any sum he pleases—

LONA. Yes, offer him money, and
will hear what he will say.

BER. Do you know what he intends
lo?

LONA. No; since yesterday he has
n dumb. He looks as if this had
le a grown man of him all at once.

BER. I must talk to him.

ONA. Here he comes. [JOHAN
es in from the right.]

ER. [*going towards him.*] Johan—!

OHAN [*motioning him away*].
en to me first. Yesterday morning
I gave you my word that I would hold
my tongue.

BER. You did.

JOHAN. But then I did not know—

BER. Johan, only let me say a word
or two to explain the circumstances—

JOHAN. It is unnecessary; I under-
stand the circumstances perfectly. The
firm was in a dangerous position at the
time; I had gone off, and you had my
defenceless name and reputation at
your mercy. Well, I do not blame
you so very much for what you did;
we were young and thoughtless in those
days. But now I have need of the
truth, and now you must speak.

BER. And just now I have need of
all my reputation for morality, and
therefore I *cannot* speak.

JOHAN. I don't take much account
of the false reports you spread about
me; it is the other thing that you must
take the blame of. I shall make Dina
my wife, and here—here in your town
—I mean to settle down and live with
her.

LONA. Is that what you mean to do?

BER. With Dina? Dina as your
wife?—in this town?

JOHAN. Yes, here and nowhere else.
I mean to stay here to defy all these
liars and slanderers. But before I can
win her you must exonerate me.

BER. Have you considered that, if
I confess to the one thing, it will in-
evitably mean making myself responsi-
ble for the other as well? You will
say that I can show by our books that
nothing dishonest happened? But I
cannot; our books were not so accur-
ately kept in those days. And even if
I could, what good would it do?
Should I not in any case be pointed at
as the man who had once saved himself

by an untruth, and for fifteen years had allowed that untruth and all its consequences to stand without having raised a finger to demolish it? You do not know our community very much, or you would realise that it would ruin me utterly.

JOHAN. I can only tell you that I mean to make Mrs. Dorf's daughter my wife, and live with her in this town.

BER. [*wiping the perspiration from his forehead*]. Listen to me, Johan—and you too, Lona. The circumstances I am in just now are quite exceptional. I am situated in such a way that if you aim this blow at me you will not only destroy me, but will also destroy a great future, rich in blessings, that lies before the community which, after all, was the home of your childhood.

JOHAN. And if I do not aim this blow at you, I shall be destroying all my future happiness with my own hand.

LONA. Go on, Karsten.

BER. I will tell you, then. It is mixed up with the railway project, and the whole thing is not quite so simple as you think. I suppose you have heard that last year there was some talk of a railway line along the coast? Many influential people backed up the idea—people in the town and the suburbs, and especially the Press; but I managed to get the proposal quashed, on the ground that it would have injured our steamboat trade along the coast.

LONA. Have you any interest in the steamboat trade?

BER. Yes. But no one ventured to suspect me on that account; my honoured name fully protected me from that. For the matter of that, I cou have stood the loss; but the place cou not have stood it. So the inland li was decided upon. As soon as that w done, I assured myself—without sa ing anything about it—that a bran line could be laid to the town.

LONA. Why did you say nothi about it, Karsten?

BER. Have you heard the rumou of extensive buying up of forest lan mines and waterfalls—?

JOHAN. Yes, apparently it is so company from another part of t country—

BER. As these properties are si ated at present, they are as good valueless to their owners, who scattered about the neighborhood; th have therefore been sold comparativ cheap. If the purchaser had waited the branch line began to be talked the proprietors would have asked orbitant prices.

LONA. Well—what then?

BER. Now I am going to tell y something that can be construed in ferent ways—a thing to which, in community, a man could only conf provided he had an untarnished honoured name to take his stand up

LONA. Well?

BER. It is I that have bought up whole of them.

LONA. You?

JOHAN. On your own account?

BER. On my own account. If branch line becomes an accomplis fact, I am a millionaire; if it does I am ruined.

LONA. It is a big risk, Karsten.

BER. I have risked my wh fortune on it.

LONA. I am not thinking of y

une; but if it comes to light that—
ER. Yes, that is the critical part of
With the unblemished and hon-
ed name I have hitherto borne, I
take the whole thing upon my
ılders, carry it through, and say to
fellow-citizens: "See, I have taken
risk for the good of the com-
ity."
ONA. Of the community?
ER. Yes; and not a soul will doubt
motives.
ONA. Then some of those con-
ed in it have acted more openly—
ıout any secret motives or consid-
ions.
ER. Who?
ONA. Why, of course, Rummel and
dstad and Vigeland.
ER. To get them on my side I was
ged to let them into the secret.
ONA. And then?
ER. They have stipulated for a
ı part of the profits as their share.
ONA. Oh, these pillars of society!
ER. And isn't it society itself that
es us to use these underhand
ns? What would have happened,
had not acted secretly? Every-
y would have wanted to have a
d in the undertaking; the whole
g would have been divided up, mis-
ıaged and bungled. There is not
ngle man in the town except myself
is capable of directing so big an
ir as this will be. In this country,
ost without exception, it is only
igners who have settled here who
e the aptitude for big business
mes. That is the reason why my
science acquits me in the matter.
s only in my hands that these prop-
es can become a real blessing to
the many who have to make their daily bread.

LONA. I believe you are right there, Karsten.

JOHAN. But I have no concern with the many, and my life's happiness is at stake.

BER. The welfare of your native place is also at stake. If things come out which cast reflections on my earlier conduct, then all my opponents will fall upon me with united vigour. A youthful folly is never allowed to be forgotten in our community. They would go through the whole of my previous life, bring up a thousand little incidents in it, interpret and explain them in the light of what has been revealed; they would crush me under the weight of rumours and slanders. I should be obliged to abandon the railway scheme; and, if I take my hand off that, it will come to nothing, and I shall be ruined and my life as a citizen will be over.

LONA. Johan, after what we have just heard, you must go away from here and hold your tongue.

BER. Yes, yes, Johan—you must!

JOHAN. Yes, I will go away, and I will hold my tongue; but I shall come back, and then I shall speak.

BER. Stay over there, Johan; hold your tongue, and I am willing to share with you—

JOHAN. Keep your money, but give me back my name and reputation.

BER. And sacrifice my own!

JOHAN. You and your community must get out of that the best way you can. I must and shall win Dina for my wife. And therefore I am going to sail tomorrow in the "Indian Girl"—

BER. In the "Indian Girl?"

JOHAN. Yes. The captain has promised to take me. I shall go over to America, as I say; I shall sell my farm and set my affairs in order. In two months I shall be back.

BER. And then you will speak?

JOHAN. Then the guilty man must take his guilt on himself.

BER. Have you forgotten that, if I do that, I must also take on myself guilt that is not mine?

JOHAN. Who is it that for the last fifteen years has benefited by that shameful rumour?

BER. You will drive me to desperation! Well, if you speak, I shall deny everything! I shall say it is a plot against me—that you have come here to blackmail me!

LONA. For shame, Karsten!

BER. I am a desperate man, I tell you, and I shall fight for my life. I shall deny everything—everything!

JOHAN. I have your two letters. I found them in my box among my other papers. This morning I read them again; they are plain enough.

BER. And will you make them public?

JOHAN. If it becomes necessary.

BER. And you will be back here in two months?

JOHAN. I hope so. The wind is fair. In three weeks I shall be in New York—if the "Indian Girl" does not go to the bottom.

BER. [*with a start*]. Go to the bottom? Why should the "Indian Girl" go to the bottom?

JOHAN. Quite so—why should she?

BER. [*scarcely audibly*]. Go to the bottom?

JOHAN. Well, Karsten, now you know what is before you. You must find your own way out. Good-by You can say good-bye to Betty for m although she has not treated me like sister. But I must see Martha. S shall tell Dina—; she shall promise m —[*Goes out through the farther do on the left.*]

BER. [*to himself*]. The "Indi Girl"—? [*Quickly.*] Lona, you *mu* prevent that!

LONA. You see for yourself, Ka sten—I have no influence over him a longer. [*Follows* JOHAN *into the oth room.*]

BER. [*a prey to uneasy thought* Go to the bottom—?

[AUNE *comes in from the righ*

AUNE. Excuse me, sir, but if it convenient—

BER. [*turning round angrily*]. Wh do you want?

AUNE. To know if I may ask you question sir.

BER. Be quick about it, then. Wh is it?

AUNE. I wanted to ask if I am consider it as certain—absolutely c tain—that I should be dismissed fr the yard if the "Indian Girl" were ready to sail tomorrow?

BER. What do you mean? The s *is* ready to sail.

AUNE. Yes—it is. But suppose were not, should I be discharged?

BER. What is the use of asking s idle questions.

AUNE. Only that I should like know, sir. Will you answer me th —should I be discharged?

BER. Am I in the habit of keep my word or not?

AUNE. Then tomorrow I sh have lost the position I hold in house and among those near and

ne—lost my influence over men of own class—lost all opportunity of g anything for the cause of the rer and needier members of the munity?

ER. Aune, we have discussed all before.

UNE. Quite so—then the "Indian " will sail.

[*A short silence.*]

ER. Look here—it is impossible for o have my eyes everywhere—I can- be answerable for everything. You give me your assurance, I suppose, the repairs have been satisfac- y carried out?

UNE. You gave me very short e, Mr. Bernick.

ER. But I understand you to warr- the repairs?

UNE. The weather is fine, and it is mer.

[*Another pause.*]

ER. Have you anything else to say ie?

UNE. I think not, sir.

ER. Then—the "Indian Girl" will —

UNE. Tomorrow?

ER. Yes.

UNE. Very good. [*Bows and goes* BERNICK *stands for a moment olute; then walks quickly towards door, as if to call* AUNE *back; but , hesitatingly, with his hand on door-handle. At that moment the is opened from without, and* KRAP *s in.*]

AP [*in a low voice*]. Aha, he has here. Has he confessed?

R. Hm—; have you discovered hing?

AP. What need of that, sir? Could you not see the evil conscience looking out of the man's eyes?

BER. Nonsense—such things don't show. Have you discovered anything, I want to know?

KRAP. I could not manage it; I was too late. They had already begun hauling the ship out of the dock. But their very haste in doing that plainly shows that—

BER. It shows nothing. Has the inspection taken place, then?

KRAP. Of course; but—

BER. There, you see! And of course they found nothing to complain of?

KRAP. Mr. Bernick, you know very well how much this inspection means, especially in a yard that has such a good name as ours has.

BER. No matter—it takes all responsibility off us.

KRAP. But, sir, could you really not tell from Aune's manner that—?

BER. Aune has completely reassured me, let me tell you.

KRAP. And let me tell you, sir, that I am morally certain that—

BER. What does this mean, Krap? I see plainly enough that you want to get your knife into this man; but if you want to attack him you must find some other occasion. You know how important it is to me—or, I should say, to the owners—that the "Indian Girl" should sail to-morrow.

KRAP. Very well—so be it; but if ever we hear of *that* ship again—hm!

[VIGELAND *comes in from the right.*]

VIG. I wish you a very good morning, Mr. Bernick. Have you a moment to spare?

BER. At your service, Mr. Vigeland.

VIG. I only want to know if you are

also of opinion that the "Palm Tree" should sail to-morrow?

BER. Certainly; I thought that was quite settled.

VIG. Well, the captain came to me just now and told me that storm-signals have been hoisted.

BER. Oh! Are we to expect a storm?

VIG. A stiff breeze, at all events; but not a contrary wind—just the opposite.

BER. Hm—well, what do you say?

VIG. I say, as I said to the captain, that the "Palm Tree" is in the hands of Providence. Besides, they are only going across the North Sea at first; and in England freights are running tolerably high just now, so that—

BER. Yes, it would probably mean a loss for us if we waited.

VIG. Besides, she is a stout ship, and fully insured as well. It is more risky, now, for the "Indian Girl"—

BER. What do you mean?

VIG. She sails to-morrow, too.

BER. Yes, the owners have been in such a hurry, and, besides—

VIG. Well, if that old hulk can venture out—and with such a crew, into the bargain—it would be a disgrace to us if we—

BER. Quite so. I presume you have the ship's papers with you.

VIG. Yes, here they are.

BER. Good; then will you go in with Mr. Krap?

KRAP. Will you come in here, sir, and we will dispose of them at once.

VIG. Thank you.—And the issue we leave in the hands of the Almighty, Mr. Bernick. [*Goes with* KRAP *into* BERNICK'S *room.* RORLUND *comes up from the garden.*]

ROR. At home at this time of da Mr. Bernick?

BER. [*lost in thought*]. As you see

ROR. It was really on your wif account I came. I thought she mig be in need of a word of comfort.

BER. Very likely she is. But I wa to have a little talk with you, too.

ROR. With the greatest of pleasu Mr. Bernick. But what is the matt with you? You look quite pale a upset.

BER. Really? Do I? Well, wh else could you expect—a man so load with responsibilities as I am? The is all my own big business—and n the planning of this railway.—But t me something, Mr. Rorlund; let me p a question to you.

ROR. With pleasure, Mr. Bernick

BER. It is about a thought that h occurred to me. Suppose a man is fa to face with an undertaking which w concern the welfare of thousands, a suppose it should be necessary to ma a sacrifice of one—?

ROR. What do you mean?

BER. For example, suppose a m were thinking of starting a large f tory. He knows for certain—becau all his experience has taught him so that sooner or later a toll of hum life will be exacted in the working that factory.

ROR. Yes, that is only too probab

BER. Or, say a man embarks on mining enterprise. He takes into service fathers of families and you men in the first flush of their you Is it not quite safe to predict that of them will not come out of it ali

ROR. Yes, unhappily that is qu true.

BER. Well—a man in that posit

know beforehand that the under-
ng he proposes to start must un-
ɔtedly, at some time or other, mean
ss of human life. But the under-
ng itself is for the public good; for
y man's life that it costs, it will
ɔubtedly promote the welfare of
y hundreds.

ɔR. Ah, you are thinking of the
vay — of all the dangerous exca-
ng and blasting, and that sort of
g—

ER. Yes—quite so—I am thinking
ne railway. And, besides, the com-
ɔf the railway will mean the start-
ɔf factories and mines. But do not
x, nevertheless —

ɔR. My dear Mr. Bernick, you are
st over-conscientious. What I
x is that, if you place the affair
ne hands of Providence—

ER. Yes—exactly; Providence—

ɔR. You are blameless in the mat-
Go on and build your railway
fully.

ER. Yes, but now I will put a
al instance to you. Suppose a
ge of blasting-powder had to be
ɔded in a dangerous place, and
unless it were exploded the line
l not be constructed? Suppose the
neer knew that it would cost the
ɔf the workman who lit the fuse,
that it had to be lit, and that it
the engineer's duy to send a work-
to do it?

ɔR. Hm—

R. I know what you will say. It
d be a splendid thing if the en-
er took the match himself and
and lit the fuse. But that is out
e question, so he must sacrifice a
man.

ROR. That is a thing no engineer here would ever do.

BER. No engineer in the bigger countries would think twice about doing it.

ROR. In the bigger countries? No, I can quite believe it. In those depraved and unprincipled communities—

BER. Oh, there is a good deal to be said for those communities.

ROR. Can you say that?—you, who yourself—

BER. In the bigger communities a man finds space to carry out a valuable project—finds the courage to make some sacrifice in a great cause; but here a man is cramped by all kinds of petty considerations and scruples.

ROR. Is human life a petty consideration?

BER. When that human life threatens the welfare of thousands.

ROR. But you are suggesting cases that are quite inconceivable, Mr. Bernick! I do not understand you at all to-day. And you quote the bigger countries—well, what do they think of human life there? They look upon it simply as part of the capital they have to use. But *we* look at things from a somewhat different moral standpoint, I should hope. Look at our respected shipping industry! Can you name a single one of our ship-owners who would sacrifice a human life for the sake of paltry gain? And then think of those scoundrels in the bigger countries, who for the sake of profit send out freights in one unseaworthy ship after another—

BER. I am not talking of unseaworthy ships!

ROR. But I am, Mr. Bernick.

BER. Yes, but to what purpose?

They have nothing to do with the question.—Oh, these small, timid considerations! If a General from this country were to take his men under fire and some of them were shot, I suppose he would have sleepless nights after it! It is not so in other countries. You should hear what that fellow in there says—

ROR. He? Who? The American—?

BER. Yes. You should hear how in America—

ROR. He, in there? And you did not tell me? I shall at once—

BER. It is no use; you won't be able to do anything with him.

ROR. We shall see. Ah, here he comes. [JOHAN *comes in from the other room.*]

JOHAN [*talking back through the open door*]. Yes, yes, Dina—as you please; but I do not mean to give you up, all the same. I shall come back, and then everything will come right between us.

ROR. Excuse me, but what did you mean by that? What is it you propose to do?

JOHAN. I propose that that young girl, before whom you blackened my character yesterday, shall become my wife.

ROR. Your wife? And can you really suppose that—?

JOHAN. I mean to marry her.

ROR. Well, then you shall know the truth. [*Goes to the half-open door.*] Mrs. Bernick, will you be so kind as to come and be a witness—and you too, Miss Martha. And let Dina come. [*Sees* LONA *at the door.*] Ah, you here too?

LONA. Shall I come too?

ROR. As many as you please—t more the better.

BER. What are you going to d [LONA, MRS. BERNICK, MARTHA, DI *and* HILMAR *come in from the oth room.*]

MRS. B. Mr. Rorlund, I have tri my hardest, but I cannot preve him—

ROR. I shall prevent him, Mrs. B nick. Dina, you are a thoughtless gi but I do not blame you so greatly. Y have too long lacked the necessa moral support that should have s tained you. I blame myself for r having afforded you that support.

DINA. You mustn't speak now!

MRS. B. What is it?

ROR. It is now that I *must* spe Dina, although your conduct yesterd and to-day has made it ten times m difficult for me. But all other c siderations must give way to the nece ity for saving you. You remem that I gave you my word; you reme ber what you promised you wo answer when I judged that the ri time had come. Now, I dare not h tate any longer, and therefore [*Turns to* JOHAN]. This young g whom you are persecuting, is my thothed.

MRS. B. What?

BER. Dina!

JOHAN. She? Your—?

MARTHA. No, no, Dina!

LONA. It is a lie!

JOHAN. Dina—is this man speak the truth?

DINA [*after a short pause*]. Yes

ROR. I hope this has rendered your arts of seduction powerless. step I have determined to take Dina's good I now wish openly

ned to every one. I cherish the cer- hope that it will not be misinter- ed. And now, Mrs. Bernick, I k it will be best for us to take her y from here, and try to bring back e and tranquillity to her mind.

RS. B. Yes, come with me. Oh, a — what a lucky girl you are! *kes* DINA *out to the left;* RORLUND *ws them.*]

ARTHA. Good-bye, Johan! [*Goes*

ILMAR [*at the verandah door*]. —I really must say—

ONA [*who has followed* DINA *with eyes, to* JOHAN]. Don't be down- ted, my boy! I shall stay here and my eye on the parson. [*Goes out he right.*]

ER. Johan, you won't sail in the dian Girl" now?

OHAN. Indeed I shall.

ER. But you won't come back?

OHAN. I am coming back.

ER. After this? What have you to ere after this?

OHAN. Revenge myself on you all; h as many of you as I can. [*Goes to the right.* VIGELAND *and* KRAP *in from* BERNICK'S *room.*]

G. There, now the papers are in r, Mr. Bernick.

ER. Good, good.

RAP [*in a low voice*]. And I sup- it is settled that the "Indian Girl" sail to-morrow?

ER. Yes. [*Goes into his room.* LAND *and* KRAP *go out to the right.* IAR *is just going after them, when puts his head carefully out of the on the left.*]

AF. Uncle! Uncle Hilmar!

LMAR. Ugh, is it you? Why don't you stay upstairs? You know you are confined to the house.

OLAF [*coming a step or two nearer*]. Hush! Uncle Hilmar, have you heard the news?

HILMAR. Yes, I have heard that you got a thrashing to-day.

OLAF [*looking threateningly towards his father's room*]. He shan't thrash me any more. But have you heard that Uncle Johan is going to sail to- morrow with the Americans?

HILMAR. What was that got to do with you? You had better run up- stairs again.

OLAF. Perhaps I shall be going for a buffalo hunt, too, one of these days, uncle.

HILMAR. Rubbish! A coward like you—

OLAF. Yes — just you wait! You will learn something to-morrow!

HILMAR. Duffer! [*Goes out through the garden.* OLAF *runs into the room again and shuts the door, as he sees* KRAP *coming in from the right.*]

KRAP [*going to the door of* BERNICK'S *room and opening it slightly*]. Excuse my bothering you again, Mr. Bernick; but there is a tremendous storm blowing up. [*Waits a moment, but there is no answer.*] Is the "In- dian Girl" to sail, for all that? [*After a short pause, the following answer is heard.*]

BER. [*from his room*]. The "Indian Girl" is to sail, for all that.

[KRAP *shuts the door and goes out again to the right.*]

ACT IV

SCENE.—*The same room. The work- table has been taken away. It is a stormy evening and already dusk. Darkness sets in as the following scene*

is in progress. A man-servant is lighting the chandelier; two maids bring in pots of flowers, lamps and candles, which they place on tables and stands along the walls. RUMMEL, *in dress clothes, with gloves and a white tie, is standing in the room giving instructions to the servants.*

RUM. Only every other candle, Jacob. It must not look as if it were arranged for the occasion—it has to come as a surprise, you know. And all these flowers—? Oh, well, let them be; it will probably look as if they stood there every day. [BERNICK *comes out of his room.*]

BER. [*stopping at the door*]. What does this mean?

RUM. Oh, dear, is it you! [*To the servants.*] Yes, you might leave us for the present. [*The servants go out.*]

BER. But, Rummel, what is the meaning of this?

RUM. It means that the proudest moment of your life has come. A procession of his fellow-citizens is coming to do honour to the first man of the town.

BER. What!

RUM. In procession—with banners and a band! We ought to have had torches too; but we did not like to risk that in this stormy weather. There will be illuminations — and that always sounds well in the newspapers.

BER. Listen, Rummel—I won't have anything to do with this.

RUM. But it is too late now; they will be here in half-an-hour.

BER. But why did you not tell me about this before?

RUM. Just because I was afraid you would raise objections to it. But I consulted your wife; she allowed me to take charge of the arrangements, wh she looks after the refreshments.

BER. [*listening*]. What is that noi Are they coming already? I fanc hear singing.

RUM. [*going to the verandah doo* Singing? Oh, that is only the Am cans. The "Indian Girl" is be towed out.

BER. Towed out? Oh, yes. Rummel, I cannot this evening; I not well.

RUM. You certainly do look b But you must pull yourself togeth devil take it—you *must!* Sands and Vigeland and I all attach greatest importance to carrying t thing through. We have got to cr our opponents under the weight of complete an expression of pul opinion as possible. Rumours are g ting about the town; our announcem about the purchase of the property c not be withheld any longer. It is perative that this very evening—af songs and speeches, amidst the clink glasses—in a word, in an ebullient mosphere of festivity—you should form them of the risk you have curred for the good of the commun In such an ebullient atmosphere festivity—as I just now described i you can do an astonishing lot with people here. But you must have t atmosphere, or the thing won't go.

BER. Yes, yes—

RUM. And especially when so d cate and ticklish a point has to negotiated. Well, thank goodness, have a name that will be a tower strength, Bernick. But listen now; must make our arrangements, to s extent. Mr. Hilmar Tonnesen has w ten an ode to you. It begins v

mingly with the words: "Raise the
l's banner high!" And Mr. Ror-
has undertaken the task of mak-
the speech of the evening. Of
se you must reply to that.

ER. I cannot to-night, Rummel.
ldn't you—?

UM. It is impossible, however will-
I might be; because as you can
gine, his speech will be especially
essed to you. Of course it is possi-
ne may say a word or two about the
of us; I have spoken to Vigeland
Sandstad about it. Our idea is
in replying, you should propose
toast of "Prosperity to our Com-
ity"; Sandstad will say a few
ds on the subject of harmonious
ions between the different strata
ociety; then Vigeland will express
hope that this new undertaking
not disturb the sound moral basis
which our community stands;
I propose, in a few suitable words,
efer to the ladies, whose work for
community, though more incon-
ious, is far from being without
nportance. But you are not listen-
to me—

ER. Yes—indeed I am. But, tell
do you think there is a very heavy
running outside?

UM. Why, are you nervous about
"Palm Tree"? She is fully in-
d, you know.

ER. Yes, she is insured; but—

UM. And in good repair—and that
e main thing.

ER. Hm—. Supposing anything
happen to a ship, it doesn't fol-
that human life will be in danger,
it? The ship and the cargo may
st—and one might lose one's boxes
papers—

RUM. Good Lord—boxes and papers are not of much consequence.

BER. Not of much consequence! No, no; I only meant—. Hush—I hear voices again.

RUM. It is on board the "Palm Tree."

[VIGELAND *comes in from the right.*]

VIG. Yes, they are just towing the "Palm Tree" out. Good evening, Mr. Bernick.

BER. And you, as a seafaring man, are still of opinion that—

VIG. I put my trust in Providence, Mr. Bernick. Moreover, I have been on board myself and distributed a few small tracts which I hope may carry a blessing with them.

[SANDSTAD *and* KRAP *come in from the right.*]

SAN. [*to some one at the door*]. Well, if that gets through all right, anything will. [*Comes in.*] Ah, good evening, good evening!

BER. Is anything the matter, Krap?

KRAP. I say nothing, Mr. Bernick.

SAN. The entire crew of the "Indian Girl" are drunk; I will stake my reputation on it that they won't come out of it alive. [LONA *comes in from the right.*]

LONA. Ah, now I can say his good-byes for him.

BER. Is he on board already?

LONA. He will be directly, at any rate. We parted outside the hotel.

BER. And he persists in his intention?

LONA. As firm as a rock.

RUM. [*who is fumbling at the window*]. Confound these new-fangled contrivances; I cannot get the curtains drawn.

LONA. Do you want them drawn? I thought, on the contrary—

RUM. Yes, drawn at first, Miss Hessel. You know what is in the wind, I suppose?

LONA. Yes. Let me help you. [*Takes hold of the cords.*] I will draw down the curtains on my brother-in-law —though I would much rather draw them up.

RUM. You can do that too, later on. When the garden is filled with a surging crowd, then the curtains shall be drawn back, and they will be able to look in upon a surprise and happy family. Citizens' lives should be such that they can live in glass houses! [BERNICK *opens his mouth, as though he were going to say something; but he turns hurriedly away and goes into his room.*]

RUM. Come along, let us have a final consultation. Come in, too, Mr. Krap; you must assist us with information on one or two points of detail. [*All the men go into* BERNICK'S *room.* LONA *has drawn the curtains over the windows, and is just going to do the same over the open glass door, when* OLAF *jumps down from the room above on to the garden steps; he has a wrap over his shoulders and a bundle in his hand.*]

LONA. Bless me, child, how you frightened me!

OLAF [*hiding his bundle*]. Hush, aunt!

LONA. Did you jump out of the window? Where are you going?

OLAF. Hush!—don't say anything. I want to go to Uncle Johan—only on to the quay, you know—only to say good-bye to him. Good-night, aunt! [*Runs out through the garden.*]

LONA. No—stop! Olaf—Olaf! [JOHAN, *dressed for his journ with a bag over his shoulder, con warily in by the door on the right.*]

JOHAN. Lona!

LONA [*turning round*]. What! Ba again?

JOHAN. I have still a few minut I must see her once more; we cann part like this. [*The farther door the left opens, and* MARTHA *and* DI *both with cloaks on, and the lat carrying a small travelling-bag in hand, come in.*]

DINA. Let me go to him! Let go to him!

MARTHA. Yes, you shall go to h Dina!

DINA. There he is!

JOHAN. Dina!

DINA. Take me with you!

JOHAN. What—!

LONA. You mean it?

DINA. Yes, take me with you. other has written to me that he me to announce to every one evening—

JOHAN. Dina—you do not love hi

DINA. I have never loved the m I would rather drown myself in fjord than be engaged to him! how he humiliated me yesterday w his condescending manner! How cl he made it that he was lifting u poor despised creature to his level! I do not mean to be despi any longer. I mean to go away. I go with him?

JOHAN. Yes, yes—a thousand tin yes!

DINA. I will not be a burden you long. Only help me to get there; help me to go the right about things at first—

JOHAN. Hurrah, it is all right after Dina!

LONA [*pointing to* BERNICK'S *door*]. sh!—gently, gently!

JOHAN. Dina, I shall look after

DINA. I am not going to let you do t. I mean to look after myself; over re, I am sure I can do that. Only me get away from here. Oh, these nen!—you don't know—they have tten to me to-day, too—exhorting to realise my good fortune—im- ssing on me how magnanimous he been. To-morrow, and every day erwards, they would be watching to see if I were making myself thy of it all. I am sick and tired all this goodiness!

JOHAN. Tell me, Dina—is that the y reason you are coming away? Am othing to you?

DINA. Yes, Johan, you are more to than any one else in the world.

JOHAN. Oh, Dina—!

DINA. Every one here tells me I ht to hate and detest you—that it ny duty; but I cannot see that it is duty, and shall never be able to.

LONA. No more you shall, my dear!

MARTHA. No, indeed you shall not; that is why you shall go with him is wife.

JOHAN. Yes, yes!

LONA. What! Give me a kiss, Mar- I never expected that from *you!*

MARTHA. No, I dare say not; I ld not have expected it myself. I was bound to break out some ! Ah, what we suffer under the nny of habit and custom! Make a d against that, Dina. Be his wife. me see you defy all this convention.

JOHAN. What is your answer, Dina?

DINA. Yes, I will be your wife.

JOHAN. Dina!

DINA. But first of all I want to work—to make something of myself—as you have done. I am not going to be merely a thing that is taken.

LONA. Quite right—that is the way.

JOHAN. Very well; I shall wait and hope—

LONA. And win, my boy! But now you must get on board!

JOHAN. Yes, on board! Ah, Lona, my dear sister, just one word with you. Look here— [*He takes her into the background and talks hurriedly to her.*]

MARTHA. Dina, you lucky girl, let me look at you, and kiss you once more—for the last time.

DINA. Not for the last time; no, my darling aunt, we shall meet again.

MARTHA. Never! Promise me, Dina, never to come back! [*Grasps her hands and looks at her.*] Now go to your happiness, my dear child—across the sea. How often, in my schoolroom, I have yearned to be over there! It must be beautiful; the skies are loftier than here—a freer air plays about your head—

DINA. Oh, Aunt Martha, some day you will follow us.

MARTHA. I? Never—never. I have my little vocation here, and now I really believe I can live to the full the life that I ought.

DINA. I cannot imagine being parted from you.

MARTHA. Ah, one can part from much, Dina. [*Kisses her.*] But I hope you may never experience that, my

sweet child. Promise me to make him happy.

DINA. I will promise nothing; I hate promises; things must happen as they will.

MARTHA. Yes, yes, that is true; only remain what you are—true and faithful to yourself.

DINA. I will, aunt.

LONA [*putting into her pocket some papers that* JOHAN *has given her*]. Splendid, splendid, my dear boy. But now you must be off.

JOHAN. Yes, we have no time to waste now. Good-bye, Lona, and thank you for all your love. Good-bye Martha, and thank you, too, for your loyal friendship.

MARTHA. Good-bye, Johan! Good-bye, Dina! And may you be happy all your lives! [*She and* LONA *hurry them to the door at the back.* JOHAN *and* DINA *go quickly down the steps and through the garden.* LONA *shuts the door and draws the curtains over it.*]

LONA. Now we are alone, Martha. You have lost her and I him.

MARTHA. You—lost him?

LONA. Oh, I had already half lost him over there. The boy was longing to stand on his own feet; that was why I pretended to be suffering from home-sickness.

MARTHA. So that was it? Ah, then I understand why you came. But he will want you back, Lona.

LONA. An old step-sister—what use will he have for her now? Men break many very dear ties to win their happiness.

MARTHA. That sometimes is so.

LONA. But we two will stick together, Martha.

MARTHA. Can I be anything t you?

LONA. Who more so? We two fo ter-sisters—haven't we both lost o children? Now we are alone.

MARTHA. Yes, alone. And therefo you ought to know this too—I lov him more than anything in the wor

LONA. Martha! [*Grasps her by t arm.*] Is that true?

MARTHA. All my existence lies those words. I have loved and wait for him. Every summer I waited f him to come. And then he came—b he had no eyes for me.

LONA. You loved him! And it w you yourself that put his happiness i to his hands.

MARTHA. Ought I not to be t one to put his happiness into h hands, since I loved him? Yes, I ha loved him. All my life has been f him, ever since he went away. Wh reason had I to hope, you mean? O I think I had some reason, all t same. But when he came back—th it seemed as if everything had be wiped out of his memory. He had eyes for me.

LONA. It was Dina that ove shadowed you, Martha?

MARTHA. And it is a good thi she did. At the time he went awa we were of the same age; but when saw him again—oh, that dreadful m ment!—I realised that now I was t years older than he. He had go out into the bright sparkling sunshi and breathed in youth and health wi every breath; and here I sat mea while, spinning and spinning—

LONA. Spinning the thread of h happiness, Martha.

MARTHA. Yes, it was a gold

ead I spun. No biterness! We have n two good sisters to him, haven't Lona?

LONA [*throwing her arms round*]. Martha!

[BERNICK *comes in from his room.*]

BER. [*to the other men, who are in room*]. Yes, yes, arrange it any y you please. When the time comes, hall be able to—. [*Shuts the door.*] you are here. Look here, Martha think you had better change your ss; and tell Betty to do the same. lon't want anything elaborate, of rse—something homely, but neat. you must make haste.

LONA. And a bright, cheerful face, rtha; your eyes must look happy.

BER. Olaf is coming downstairs too; ill have him beside me.

LONA. Hm! Olaf—

MARTHA. I will give Betty your sage. [*Goes out by the farther r on the left.*]

ONA. Well, the great and solemn nent is at hand.

BER. [*walking uneasily up and n*]. Yes, it is.

ONA. At such a moment I should k a man would feel proud and py.

ER. [*looking at her*]. Hm!

ONA. I hear the whole town is to lluminated.

ER. Yes, they have some idea of sort.

ONA. All the different clubs will mble with their banners—your e will blaze out in letters of fire—ight the telegraph will flash the s to every part of the country: the bosom of his happy family, Bernick received the homage of his fellow-citizens as one of the pillars of society."

BER. That is so; and they will begin to cheer outside, and the crowd will shout in front of my house until I shall be obliged to go out and bow to them and thank them.

LONA. Obliged to?

BER. Do you suppose I shall feel happy at that moment?

LONA. No, I don't suppose you will feel so very happy.

BER. Lona, you despise me.

LONA. Not yet.

BER. And you have no right to; no right to *despise* me! Lona, you can have no idea how utterly alone I stand in this cramped and stunted community—where I have had, year after year, to stifle my ambition for a fuller life. My work may seem many-sided, but what have I really accomplished? Odds and ends—scrape. They would not stand anything else here. If I were to go a step in advance of the opinions and views that are current at the moment, I should lose all my influence. Do you know what we are—we who are looked upon as pillars of society? We are nothing more nor less than the tools of society.

LONA. Why have you only begun to realize that now?

BER. Because I have been thinking a great deal lately—since you came back—and this evening I have thought more seriously than ever before. Oh, Lona, why did not I really know you then—in the old days, I mean?

LONA. And if you had?

BER. I should never have let you go; and, if I had had you, I should not be in the position I am in to-night.

LONA. And do you never consider

what *she* might have been to you—she whom you chose in my place?

BER. I know, at all events, that she has been nothing to me of what I needed.

LONA. Because you have never shared your interests with her; because you have never allowed her full and frank exchange of thoughts with you; because you have allowed her to be borne under by self-reproach for the shame you cast upon one who was dear to her.

BER. Yes, yes; it all comes from lying and deceit.

LONA. Then why not break with all this lying and deceit?

BER. Now? It is too late now, Lona.

LONA. Karsten, tell me—what gratification does all this show and deception bring you?

BER. It brings *me* none. I must disappear some day, and all this community of bunglers with me. But a generation is growing up that will follow us; it is my son that I work for—I am providing a career for *him*. There will come a time when truth will enter into the life of the community, and on that foundation he shall build up a happier existence than his father.

LONA. With a lie at the bottom of it all? Consider what sort of an inheritance it is that you are leaving to your son.

BER. [*in tones of suppressed despair*]. It is a thousand times worse than you think. But surely some day the curse must be lifted; and yet—nevertheless—. [*Vehemently.*] How could I bring all this upon my own head! Still, it is done now; I must go on with it now. You *shall* not succeed in crushing me! [HILMAR *comes in hurriedly and agitatedly from the right, with an open letter in his hand.*

HILMAR. But this is—. Betty Betty!

BER. What is the matter? Are they coming already?

HILMAR. No, no—but I must speak to some one immediately. [*Goes out through the farther door on the left.*

LONA. Karsten, you talk about our having come here to crush you. Shall let me tell you what sort of stuff this prodigal son, whom your moral community shuns as if he had the plague is made of. He can do without any of you—for he is away now.

BER. But he said he meant to come back—

LONA. Johan will never come back. He is gone for good, and Dina with him.

BER. Never come back?—and Dina with him?

LONA. Yes, to be his wife. That is how these two strike your virtuous community in the face, just as I did once—but never mind that.

BER. Gone—and she too—in the "Indian Girl"—

LONA. No; he would not trust such precious a freight to that rascally crew. Johan and Dina are on the "Palm Tree."

BER. Ah! Then it is all in vain—[*Goes hurriedly to the door of her room, opens it and calls in.*] Krap stop the "Indian Girl"—she must not sail to-night!

KRAP [*from within*]. The "Indian Girl" is already standing out to sea Mr. Bernick.

BER. [*shutting the door and speak*

g faintly]. Too late—and all to no
ırpose—

LONA. What do you mean?

BER. Hm!—look here, Karsten.
han was good enough to say that he
trusted to me the good name and
putation that he once lent to you,
d also the good name that you stole
om him while he was away. Johan
ll hold his tongue; and I can act
st as I please in the matter. See,
have two letters in my hand.

BER. You have got them! And
u mean now—this very evening—
rhaps when the procession comes—

LONA. I did not come back here
betray you, but to stir your con-
ience so that you should speak of
ur own free will. I did not succeed
doing that—so you must remain as
u are, with your life founded upon
lie. Look, I am tearing your two
ters in pieces. Take the wretched
ngs—there you are. Now there is
evidence against you, Karsten. You
e safe now; be happy, too—if you
n.

BER. [*much moved*]. Lona—why
l you not do that sooner! Now it is
late; life no longer seems good to
; I cannot live on after to-day.

LONA. What has happened?

BER. Do not ask me— But I *must*
e on, nevertheless.! I *will* live—for
af's sake. He shall make amends
everything—expiate everything—

LONA. Karsten—! [HILMAR *comes
rriedly back.*]

HILMAR. I cannot find any one;
y are all out—even Betty!

BER. What is the matter with you?

HILMAR. I daren't tell you.

BER. What is it? You *must* tell
!

HILMAR. Very well—Olaf has run away on board the "Indian Girl"!

BER. [*stumbling back*]. Olaf—on board the "Indian Girl"! No, no!

LONA. Yes, he is! Now I understand—I saw him jump out of the window.

BER. [*calls in through the door of his room in a despairing voice*]. Krap, stop the "Indian Girl" at any cost!

KRAP. It is impossible, sir. How can you suppose—?

BER. We *must* stop her; Olaf is on board!

KRAP. What!

RUM. [*coming out of* BERNICK'S *room*]. Olaf run away? Impossible!

SAN. [*following him*]. He will be sent back with the pilot, Mr. Bernick.

HILMAR. No, no; he has written to me. [*Shows the letter.*] He says he means to hide among the cargo till they are in the open sea.

BER. I shall never see him again!

RUM. What nonsense!—a good strong ship, newly repaired—

VIG. [*who has followed the others out of* BERNICK'S *room*]. And in your own yard, Mr. Bernick!

BER. I shall never see him again, I tell you. I have lost him, Lona; and—I see it now—he never was really mine. [*Listens.*] What is that?

RUM. Music. The procession must be coming.

BER. I cannot take any part in it —I will not.

RUM. What are you thinking of! That is impossible.

SAN. Impossible, Mr. Bernick; think what you have at stake.

BER. What does it all matter to me now? What have I to work for now?

RUM. Can you ask? You have us and the community.

VIG. Quite true.

SAN. And surely, Mr. Bernick, you have not forgotten that we—. [MARTHA *comes in through the farther door to the left. Music is heard in the distance, down the street.*]

MARTHA. The procession is just coming, but Betty is not in the house. I don't understand where she—

BER. Not in the house! There, you see, Lona—no support to me, either in gladness or in sorrow.

RUM. Draw back the curtains! Come and help me, Mr. Krap—and you, Mr. Sandstad. It is a thousand pities that the family should not be united just now; it is quite contrary to the programme. [*They draw back all the curtains. The whole street is seen to be illuminated. Opposite the house is a large transparency, bearing the words:* "Long live Karsten Bernck, Pillar of our Society"!]

BER. [*shrinking back*]. Take all that away! I don't want to see it! Put it out, put it out!

RUM. Excuse me, Mr. Bernick, but are you not well?

MARTHA. What is the matter with him, Lona?

LONA. Hush! [*Whispers to her.*]

BER. Take away those mocking words, I tell you! Can't you see that all these lights are grinning at us?

RUM. Well, really, I must confess—

BER. Oh, how could you understand—! But I, I—! It is all like candles in a dead-room!

RUM. Well, let me tell you that you are taking the thing a great deal too seriously.

SAN. The boy will enjoy a trip across the Atlantic, and then you will have him back.

VIG. Only put your trust in the Almighty, Mr. Bernick.

RUM. And in the vessel, Bernick it is not likely to sink, I know.

KRAP. Hm—

RUM. Now if it were one of those floating coffins that one hears are sent out by men in the bigger countries—

BER. I am sure my hair must be turning grey! [MRS. BERNICK *comes in from the garden, with a shawl over her head.*]

MRS. B. Karsten, Karsten, do you know—?

BER. Yes, I know; but you—you who see nothing that is going on—you who have no mother's eyes for your son—!

MRS. B. Listen to me, do!

BER. Why did you not look after him? Now I have lost him. Give him back to me, if you can.

MRS. B. I can! I have got him.

BER. You have got him!

THE MEN. Ah!

HILMAR. Yes, I thought so.

MARTHA. You have got him back, Karsten!

LONA. Yes—make him your own now.

BER. You have got him? Is this true? Where is he?

MRS. B. I shall not tell you, that you have forgiven him.

BER. Forgiven! But how did you know—?

MRS. B. Do you not think a mother sees? I was in mortal fear of you getting to know anything about it. Some words he let fall yesterday

d then his room was empty, and his apsack and clothes missing—

BER. Yes, yes?

MRS. B. I ran, and got hold of ıne; we went out in his boat; the nerican ship was on the point of ling. Thank God, we were in time got on board—searched the hold—und him! Oh, Karsten, you must not ınish him!

BER. Betty!

MRS. B. Nor Aune, either!

BER. Aune? What do you know out him? Is the "Indian Girl" der sail again?

MRS. B. No, that is just it.

BER. Speak, speak!

MRS. B. Aune was just as agitated I was; the search took us some time; had grown dark, and the pilot made jections; and so Aune took upon nself—in your name—

BER. Well?

MRS. B. To stop the ship's sailing tomorrow.

KRAP. Hm—

BER. Oh, how glad I am!

MRS. B. You are not angry?

BER. I cannot tell you how glad I , Betty!

RUM. You really take things far seriously.

HILMAR. Oh! yes, as soon as it is a estion of a little struggle with the ments—ugh!

KRAP [*going to the window*]. The ocession is just coming through ır garden gate, Mr. Bernick.

BER. Yes, they can come now.

RUM. The whole garden is full of ople.

SAN. The whole street is crammed.

RUM. The whole town is afoot, Bernick. It really is a moment that makes one proud.

VIG. Let us take it in a humble spirit, Mr. Rummel.

RUM. All the banners are out! What a procession! Here comes the committee, with Mr. Rorlund at their head.

BER. Yes, let them come in!

RUM. But, Bernick—in your present agitated frame of mind—

BER. Well, what?

RUM. I am quite willing to speak instead of you, if you like.

BER. No, thank you; I will speak for myself to-night.

RUM. But are you sure you know what to say?

BER. Yes, make your mind easy, Rummel—I know now what to say. [*The music grows louder. The verandah door is opened.* RORLUND *comes in, at the head of the Committee, escorted by a couple of hired waiters, who carry a covered basket. They are followed by townspeople of all classes, as many as can get into the room. An apparently endless crowd of people, waving banners and flags, are visible in the garden and the street.*]

ROR. Mr. Bernick! I see, from the surprise depicted upon your face, that it is as unexpected guests that we are intruding upon your happy family circle and your peaceful fireside, where we find you surrounded by honoured and energetic fellow-citizens and friends. But it is our hearts that have bidden us come to offer you our homage—not for the first time, it is true, but for the first time on such a comprehensive scale. We have on many occasions given you our thanks for the broad moral foundation upon

which you have, so to speak, reared the edifice of our community. On this occasion we offer our homage especially to the clear-sighted, indefatigable, unselfish—nay, self-sacrificing—citizen who has taken the initiative in an undertaking which, we are assured on all sides, will give a powerful impetus to the temporal prosperity and welfare of our community.

VOICES. Bravo, bravo!

ROR. You, sir, have for many years been a shining example in our midst. This is not the place for me to speak of your family life, which has been a model to us all; still less to enlarge upon your unblemished personal character. Such topics belong to the stillness of a man's own chamber, not to a festal occasion such as this! I am here to speak of your public life as a citizen, as it lies open to all men's eyes. Well-equipped vessels sail away from your ship-yard and carry our flag far and wide over the seas. A numerous and happy band of workmen look up to you as to a father. By calling new branches of industry into existence, you have laid the foundations of the welfare of hundreds of families. In a word—you are, in the fullest sense of the term, the mainstay of our community.

VOICES. Hear, hear! Bravo!

ROR. And, sir, it is just that disinterestedness, which colours all your conduct, that is so beneficial to our community—more so than words can express—and especially at the present moment. You are now on the point of procuring for us what I have no hesitation in calling bluntly by its prosaic name—a railway!

VOICES. Bravo, bravo!

ROR. But it would seem as though the undertaking were beset by certain difficulties, the outcome of narrow and selfish considerations.

VOICES. Hear, hear!

ROR. For the fact has come to light that certain individuals, who do not belong to our community, have stolen a march upon the hard-working citizens of this place, and have laid hands on certain sources of profit which by rights should have fallen to the share of our town.

VOICES. That's right! Hear, hear!

ROR. This regrettable fact has naturally come to your knowledge also Mr. Bernick. But it has not had the slightest effect in deterring you from proceeding steadily with your project well knowing that a patriotic man should not solely take local interests into consideration.

VOICES. Oh!—No, no!—Yes, yes!

ROR. It is to such a man—to the patriot citizen, whose character we all should emulate—that we bring our homage this evening. May your undertaking grow to be a real and lasting source of good fortune to the community It is true enough that the railway may be the means of our exposing ourselves to the incursion of pernicious influences from without but it gives us also the means of quickly expelling them from within. For even we, at the present time, cannot boast of being entirely free from the danger of such outside influences; but as we have, on this very evening—if rumour is to be believed—fortunately got rid of certain elements of that nature, sooner than was to be expected-

VOICES. Order, order!

ROR. I regard the occurrence as

ppy omen for our undertaking. My uding to such a thing at such a mo- nt only emphasises the fact that the use in which we are now standing one where the claims of morality are eemed even above ties of family.

Voices. Hear, hear! Bravo!

Ber. [*at the same moment*]. Allow —

Ror. I have only a few more words say, Mr. Bernick. What you have ne for your native place we all know s not been done with any underlying a of its bringing tangible profit to urself. But, nevertheless, you must refuse to accept a slight token of iteful appreciation at the hands of ur fellow-citizens—least of all at s important moment when, accord- to the assurances of practical men, are standing on the threshold of a v era.

Voices. Bravo! Hear, hear!

[Rorlund *signs to the servants, who bring forward the basket. During the following speech, members of the Committee take out and present the various objects mentioned.*]

Ror. And so, Mr. Bernick, we have pleasure of presenting you with silver coffee-service. Let it grace r board when in the future, as so en in the past, we have the happi- s of being assembled under your pitable roof.

You, too, gentlemen, who have so erously seconded the leader of our mmunity, we ask to accept a small venir. This silver goblet is for , Mr. Rummel. Many a time have , amidst the clink of glasses, de- ded the interests of your fellow- zens in well-chosen words; may you often find similar worthy opportunities to raise and empty this goblet in some patriotic toast! To you, Mr. Sandstad, I present this album containing photographs of your fellow-citizens. Your well-known and conspicuous liberality has put you in the pleasant position of being able to number your friends amongst all classes of society. And to you, Mr. Vigeland, I have to offer this book of Family Devotions, printed on vellum and handsomely bound, to grace your study table. The mellowing influence of time has led you to take an earnest view of life; your zeal in carrying out your daily duties has, for a long period of years, been purified and ennobled by thoughts of higher and holier things. [*Turns to the crowd.*] And now, friends, three cheers for Mr. Bernick and his fellow-workers! Three cheers for the Pillars of our Society!

The Whole Crowd. Bernick! Pillars of Society! Hurrah—hurrah—hurrah!

Lona. I congratulate you, brother-in-law!

[*An expectant hush follows.*]

Ber. [*speaking seriously and slowly*]. Fellow citizens—your spokesman said just now that to-night we are standing on the threshold of a new era. I hope that will prove to be the case. But before that can come to pass, we must lay fast hold of *truth*—truth which, till to-night, has been altogether and in all circumstances a stranger to this community of ours. [*Astonishment among the audience.*] To that end, I must begin by deprecating the praises which you, Mr. Rorlund, according to custom on such occasions, have overwhelmed me. I do not deserve them;

because, until to-day, my actions have by no means been disinterested. Even though I may not always have aimed at pecuniary profit, I at all events recognise now that a craving for power, influence and position has been the moving spirit of most of my actions.

RUM. [*half aloud*]. What next!

BER. Standing before my fellow citizens, I do not reproach myself for that; because I still think I am entitled to a place in the front rank of our capable men of affairs.

VOICES. Yes, yes, yes!

BER. But what I charge myself with is that I have so often been weak enough to resort to deceitfulness, because I knew and feared the tendency of the community to espy unclean motives behind everything a prominent man here undertakes. And now I am coming to a point which will illustrate that.

RUM. [*uneasily*]. Hm—hm!

BER. There have been rumours of extensive purchases of property outside the town. These purchases have been made by me—by me alone, and by no one else. [*Murmurs are heard:* "What does he say? — He? — Bernick?"] The properties are, for the time being, in my hands. Naturally I have confided in my fellow-workers, Mr. Rummel, Mr. Vigeland and Mr. Sandstad, and we are all agreed that—

RUM. It is not true! Prove it—prove it!

VIG. We are not all agreed about anything!

SAN. Well, really I must say—!

BER. That is quite true—we are not yet agreed upon the matter I was going to mention. But I confidently hope that these three gentlemen will agree with me when I announce to yo that I have to-night come to the de cision that these properties shall be ex ploited as a company of which th shares shall be offered for public sub scription; any one that wishes ca take shares.

VOICES. Hurrah! Three cheers fo Bernick!

RUM. [*in a low voice, to* BERNICK] This is the basest treachery—!

SAN. [*also in an undertone*]. S you have been fooling us—!

VIG. Well, then, devil take— Good Lord, what am I saying? [*Cheer are heard without.*]

BER. Silence, gentlemen. I hav no right to this homage you offer me because the decision I have just com to does not represent what was m first intention. My intention was t keep the whole thing for myself; an even now, I am of opinion that the properties would be worked to be advantage if they remained in on man's hands. But you are at liber to choose. If you wish it, I am willin to administer them to the best of m abilities.

VOICES. Yes, yes, yes!

BER. But, first of all, my fellow townsmen must know me thoroughl And let each man seek to know hi self thoroughly, too; and so let really come to pass that to-night w begin a new era. The old era—wi its affectations, its hypocrisy and i emptiness, its pretence of virtue an its miserable fear of public opinion shall be for us like a museum, ope for purposes of instruction; and that museum we will present—shall w not, gentlemen?—the coffee servic and the goblet, and the album, and t

nily Devotions printed on vellum handsomely bound.

ŁUM. Oh, of course.

'IG. [*muttering*]. If you have taken rything else, then—

AN. By all means.

ER. And now for the principal koning I have to make with the munity. Mr. Rorlund said that cer- pernicious elements had left us evening. I can add what you do yet know. The man referred to not go away alone; with him, to me his wife, went—

ONA [*loudly*]. Dina Dorf.

OR. What?

RS. B. What? [*Great commo-*.]

OR. Fled? Run away—with him! ossible!

ER. To become his wife, Mr. Ror- . And I will add more. [*In a low e, to his wife.*] Betty, be strong ear what is coming. [*Aloud.*] is what I have to say: hats off to man, for he has nobly taken an- r's guilt upon his shoulders. My nds, I want to have done with hood; it has very nearly poisoned y fibre of my being. You shall v all. Fifteen years ago, *I* was the y man.

RS. B. [*softly and tremblingly*]. sten!

ARTHA [*similarly*]. Ah, Johan—!

NA. Now at last you have found self!

peechless consternation among the ence.]

ER. Yes, friends, I was the guilty and he went away. The vile and rumours that were spread abroad wards, it is beyond human power fute now; but I have no right to complain of that. For fifteen years, I have climbed up the ladder of success by the help of those rumours; whether now they are to cast me down again, or not, each of you must decide in his own mind.

ROR. What a thunderbolt! Our leading citizen—! [*In a low voice, to* BETTY.] How sorry I am for you, Mrs. Bernick!

HILMAR. What a confession! Well, I must say—!

BER. But come to no decision to-night. I entreat every one to go home —to collect his thoughts—to look into his own heart. When once more you can think calmly, then it will be seen whether I have lost or won by speaking out. Good-bye! I have still much —very much—to repent of; but that concerns my own conscience only. Good-night! Take away all these signs of rejoicing. We must all feel that they are out of place here.

ROR. That they certainly are. [*In an undertone to* MRS. BERNICK.] Run away! So then she was completely unworthy of me. [*Louder, to the Committee.*] Yes, gentlemen, after this I think we had better disperse as quietly as possible.

HILMAR. How, after this, any one is to manage to hold the Ideal's banner high—. Ugh!

[*Meantime the news has been whispered from mouth to mouth. The crowd gradually disperses from the garden.* RUMMEL, SANDSTAD *and* VIGELAND *go out, arguing eagerly but in a low voice.* HILMAR *slinks away to the right. When silence is restored, there only remain in the room* BERNICK, MRS. BERNICK, MARTHA, LONA *and* KRAP.]

BER. Betty, can you forgive me?

MRS. B. [*looking at him with a smile*]. Do you know, Karsten, that you have opened out for me the happiest prospect I have had for many a year?

BER. How?

MRS. B. For many years I have felt that once you were mine and that I had lost you. Now I know that you never have been mine yet; but I shall win you.

BER. [*folding her in his arms*]. Oh, Betty, you *have* won me. It was through Lona that I first learnt really to know you. But now let Olaf come to me.

MRS. B. Yes, you shall have him now. Mr. Krap—! [*Talks softly to* KRAP *in the background. He goes out by the garden door. During what follows the illuminations and lights in the houses are gradually extinguished.*]

BER. [*in a low voice*]. Thank you, Lona—you have saved what was best in me—and for me.

LONA. Do you suppose I wanted to do anything else?

BER. Yes, was that so—or not? I cannot quite make you out.

LONA. Hm—

BER. Then it was not hatred? Not revenge? Why did you come back, then?

LONA. Old friendship does not rust.

BER. Lona!

LONA. When Johan told me about the lie, I swore to myself that the hero of my youth should stand free and true.

BER. What a wretch I am!—and how little I have deserved it of you!

LONA. Oh, if we women always looked for what we deserve, Ka sten—! [AUNE *comes in with* OLA *from the garden*].

BER. [*going to meet them*]. Olaf!

OLAF. Father, I promise I wi never do it again—

BER. Never run away?

OLAF. Yes, yes, I promise yo father.

BER. And I promise you, you sha never have reason to. For the futu you shall be allowed to grow up, n as the heir to *my* life's work, but one who has his own life's work befo him.

OLAF. And shall I be allowed to what I like, when I grow up?

BER. Yes.

OLAF. Oh, thank you! Then won't be a pillar of society.

BER. No? Why not?

OLAF. No—I think it must be dull.

BER. You shall be yourself, Ola the rest may take care of itself.—A you, Aune—

AUNE. I know, Mr. Bernick; I a dismissed.

BER. We remain together, Aun and forgive me—

AUNE. What? The ship has n sailed to-night.

BER. Nor will it sail to-morro either. I gave you too short grace. must be looked to more thoroughly.

AUNE. It shall, Mr. Bernick—a with the new machines!

BER. By all means—but thorou ly and conscientiously. There a many among us who need thoro and conscientious repairs, Aune. We good-night.

AUNE. Good-night, sir—and tha you, thank you. [*Goes out.*]

IRS. B. Now they are all gone.

ER. And we are alone. My name not shining in letters of fire any ger; all the lights in the windows out.

ONA. Would you wish them lit in?

ER. Not for anything in the world. ere have I been! You would be rified if you knew. I feel now as had come back to my right senses, r being poisoned. But I feel this at I *can* be young and healthy in. Oh, come nearer—come closer nd me. Come, Betty! Come, Olaf, boy! And you, Martha—it seems ne as if I had never seen you all e years.

ONA. No, I can believe that. Your munity is a community of bache- souls; you do not see women.

ER. That is quite true; and for very reason—this is a bargain, a—you must not leave Betty and

IRS. B. No, Lona, you must not.

LONA. No, how could I have the heart to go away and leave you young people who are just setting up housekeeping? Am I not your foster-mother? You and I, Martha, the two old aunts—. What are you looking at?

MARTHA. Look how the sky is clearing, and how light it is over the sea. The "Palm Tree" is going to be lucky.

LONA. It carries its good luck on board.

BER. And we—we have a long earnest day of work ahead of us; I most of all. But let it come; only keep close round me, you true, loyal women. I have learnt *this* too, in these last few days; it is you women that are the pillars of society.

LONA. You have learnt a poor sort of wisdom, then, brother-in-law. [*Lays her hand firmly upon his shoulder.*] No, my friend; the spirit of truth and the spirit of freedom—they are the pillars of society.

Volume IX

Rosmersholm

THE PERSONS OF THE PLAY.

ANNES ROSMER, *formerly clergyman of the parish.*

ECCA WEST, *in charge of Rosmer's household.*

TOR KROLL, *Rosmer's brother-in-law.*

IC BRENDEL.

ER MORTENSGARD.

AM HELSETH, *housekeeper at Rosmersholm.*

action takes place at Rosmersholm, old family seat near a small coast wn in the west of Norway.

ACT I

ENE — *Sitting-room at Rosmers-; spacious, old-fashioned, and ortable. In front, on the right, tove decked with fresh birch-ches and wild flowers. Farther , on the same side, a door. In back wall, folding-doors opening the hall. To the left, a window, before it a stand with flowers and ts. Beside the stove a table with fa and easy chairs. On the walls, and more recent portraits of ymen, officers, and government of-s in uniform. The window is ; so are the door into the hall and house door beyond. Outside can een an avenue of fine old trees, ng up to the house. It is a sum-evening, after sunset.*

BECCA WEST *is sitting in an easy- by the window, and crocheting a large white woolen shawl, which is nearly finished. She now and then looks out expectantly through the leaves of the plants.* MADAM HELSETH *presently enters from the right.*

MADAM H. I suppose I had better begin to lay the table, Miss?

REB. Yes, please do. The Pastor must soon be in now.

MADAM H. Don't you feel the draught, Miss, where you're sitting?

REB. Yes, there is a little draught. Perhaps you had better shut the window.

[MADAM HELSETH *shuts the door into the hall, and then comes to the window.*]

MADAM H. [*about to shut the window, looks out*]. Why, isn't that the Pastor over there?

REB. [*hastily*], Where? [*Rises.*] Yes, it is he. [*Behind the curtain.*] Stand aside—don't let him see us.

MADAM H. [*keeping back from the window*]. Only think, Miss—he's beginning to take the path by the mill again.

REB. He went that way the day before yesterday too. [*Peeps out between the curtains and the window-frame.*] But let us see whether——

MADAM H. Will he venture across the foot-bridge?

REB. That is what I want to see. [*After a pause.*] No, he is turning. He is going by the upper road again. [*Leaves the window*]. A long way round.

MADAM H. Dear Lord, yes. No wonder the Pastor thinks twice about setting foot on that bridge. A place where a thing like that has happened—

REB. [*folding up her work*]. They cling to their dead here at Rosmersholm.

MADAM H. Now I would say, Miss, that it's the dead that clings to Rosmersholm.

REB. [*looks at her*]. The dead?

MADAM H. Yes, it's almost as if they couldn't tear themselves away from the folk that are left.

REB. What makes you fancy that?

MADAM H. Well, if it wasn't for that, there would be no White Horse, I suppose.

REB. Now what is all this about the White Horse, Madam Helseth?

MADAM H. Oh, I don't like to talk about it. And, besides, you don't believe in such things.

REB. Do you believe in it, then?

MADAM H. [*goes and shuts the window*]. Oh, you'd only be for laughing at me, Miss. [*Looks out.*] Why, isn't that Mr. Rosmer on the mill-path again——?

REB. [*looks out*]. That man there? [*Goes to the window.*] No, that's the Rector!

MADAM H. Yes, so it is.

REB. This is delightful. You may be sure he's coming here.

MADAM H. He goes straight over the foot-bridge, he does. And yet she was his sister, his own flesh and blood. Well, I'll go and lay the table then, Miss West.

[*She goes out to the right.* REBECCA *stands at the window for a short time; then smiles and nods to some one outside. It begins to grow dark.*]

REB. [*goes to the door on the righ*
Oh, Madam Helseth, you might let
have some little extra dish for su
per. You know what the Rector lik
best.

MADAM H. [*outside*]. Oh! yes, Mi
I'll see to it.

REB. [*opens the door to the hal*
At last—! How glad I am to s
you, my dear Rector.

RECTOR KROLL [*in the hall, layi*
down his stick.] Thanks. Then I a
not disturbing you.

REB. You? How can you ask?

KROLL [*comes in.*] Amiable as ev
[*Looks round.*] Is Rosmer upstairs
his room?

REB. No, he is out walking. He h
stayed out rather longer than usua
but he is sure to be in direct
[*Motioning him to sit on the sof*
Won't you sit down till he comes?

KROLL [*laying down his hat.*] Ma
thanks. [*Sits down and looks abo*
him.] Why, how you have brighten
up the old room! Flowers everywhe

REB. Mr. Rosmer is so fond
having fresh growing flowers abo
him.

KROLL. And you are too, are y
not?

REB. Yes; they have a delightfu
soothing effect on me. We had
do without them, though, till lately

KROLL. I remember, I rememb

KROLL [*nods sadly.*] Yes, their sc
was too much for poor Beata.

REB. Their colours, too. They qu
bewildered her—[*In a lighter ton*
Well, how are things going out he

REB. Oh, everything is going
quiet, jog-trot, way. One day is j

another.—And with you? Your
——?

KROLL. Ah, my dear Miss West,
't let us talk about my affairs.
re is always something or other
ss in a family; especially in times
these.

EB. [*after a pause, sitting down in
easy-chair beside the sofa*]. How is
ou haven't once been near us dur-
the whole of the holidays?

ROLL. Oh, it doesn't do to make
self a nuisance——

EB. If you knew how we have
ed you——

ROLL. And then I have been
y——

EB. Yes, for the last week or two.
have heard of you at political
tings.

ROLL [*nods*]. Yes, what do you
to that? Did you think I would
political agitator in my old age,

EB. [*smiling*]. Well, you have al-
s been a bit of an agitator, Rector
ll.

ROLL. Why, yes, just for my pri-
amusement. But henceforth it is
e no laughing matter. I can tell
Do you ever see those radical
spapers?

EB. Well yes, my dear Rector, I
deny that——

ROLL. My dear Miss West, I have
ing to say against it—nothing in
case.

EB. No, surely not. One likes to
what's going on—to keep up
the time—

ROLL. And of course I should not
of expecting you, as a woman,
de actively with either party in
ivil contest—I might almost say
the civil war—that is raging among us. But you have seen then, I suppose, how these gentlemen of "the people" have been pleased to treat me? What infamous abuse they have had the audacity to heap on me?

REB. Yes; but it seems to me you gave as good as you got.

KROLL. So I did, though I say it that shouldn't. For now I have tasted blood; and they shall soon find to their cost that I am not the man to turn the other cheek—— [*Breaks off.*] But come, come—don't let us get upon that subject this evening—it's too painful and irritating.

REB. Oh, no, don't let us talk of it.

KROLL. Tell me now—how do you get on at Rosmersholm, now that you are alone? Since our poor Beata——

REB. Thank you, I get on very well. Of course one feels a great blank in many ways—a great sorrow and longing. But otherwise——

KROLL. And do you thing of remaining here?—permanently, I mean.

REB. My dear Rector, I really haven't thought about it, one way or the other. I have got so used to the place now, that I feel almost as if I belonged to it.

KROLL. Why, of course you belong to it.

REB. And so long as Mr. Rosmer finds that I am of any use or comfort to him—why, so long, I suppose, I shall stay here.

KROLL [*looks at her with emotion*]. Do you know,—it is really fine for a woman to sacrifice her whole youth to others as you have done.

REB. Oh, what else should I have had to live for?

KROLL. First, there was your un-

tiring devotion to your paralytic and exacting foster-father—

REB. You mustn't suppose that Dr. West was such a charge when we were up in Finmark. It was those terrible boat-voyages up there that broke him down. But after we came here—well yes, the two years before he found rest were certainly hard enough.

KROLL. And the years that followed —were they not even harder for you?

REB. Oh, how can you say such a thing? When I was so fond of Beata —and when she, poor dear, stood so sadly in need of care and forbearance.

KROLL. How good it is of you to think of her with so much kindness!

REB. [*moves a little nearer*]. My dear Rector, you say that with such a ring of sincerity that I cannot think there is any ill-feeling lurking in the background.

KROLL. Ill-feeling? Why, what do you mean?

REB. Well, it would be only natural if you felt it painful to see a stranger managing the household here in Rosmersholm.

KROLL. Why, how on earth——!

REB. But you have no such feeling? [*Takes his hand.*] Thanks, my dear Rector; thank you again and again.

KROLL. How on earth did you get such an idea into your head?

REB. I began to be a little afraid when your visits became so rare.

KROLL. Then you have been on a totally wrong scent, Miss West. Besides—after all, there has been no essential change. Even while poor Beata was alive—in her last unhappy days—it was you, and you alone, that managed everything.

REB. That was only a sort of re ency in Beata's name.

KROLL. Be that as it may——. I you know, Miss West—for my part, should have no objection whatever you——. But I suppose I mustn't s such a thing.

REB. What must you not say?

KROLL. If matters were to shape that you took the empty place——

REB. I have the only place I wa Rector.

KROLL. In fact, yes; but not in—

REB. [*interrupting gravely*]. F shame, Rector Kroll. How can y joke about such things?

KROLL. Oh! well, our good Johann Rosmer very likely thinks he has h more than enough of married life ready. But nevertheless——

REB. You are really too absu Rector.

KROLL. Nevertheless——. Tell m Miss West—if you will forgive t question—what is your age?

REB. I'm sorry to say I am ov nine-and-twenty, Rector; I am in m thirtieth year.

KROLL. Indeed. And Rosmer—h old is he? Let me see: he is five yea younger than I am, so that makes h well over forty-three. I think it wo be most suitable.

REB. [*rises*]. Of course, of cour most suitable.—Will you stay to su per this evening?

KROLL. Yes, many thanks; I thoug of staying. There is a matter I wa to discuss with our good friend.—A I suppose, Miss West, in case y should take fancies into your he again, I had better come out pre often for the future—as I used to the old days.

EB. Oh! yes, do—do. [*Shakes both hands.*] Many thanks—how kind good you are!

ROLL [*gruffly*]. Am I? Well, 's not what they tell me at home.

JOHANNES ROSMER *enters at the r on the right.*]

EB. Mr. Rosmer, do you see who ere?

OS. Madam Helseth told me.

RECTOR KROLL *has risen.*]

OS. [*gently and softly, pressing his ds.*] Welcome back to this house, dear Kroll. [*Lays his hands on* LL'S *shoulders and looks into his .*] My dear old friend. I knew sooner or later things would come right between us.

ROLL. Why, my dear fellow—do mean to say you too have been oolish as to fancy there was any- g wrong?

EB. [*to* ROSMER]. Yes, only think, was nothing but fancy after all!

OS. Is that really the case, Kroll? n why did you desert us so en- y?

ROLL [*gravely, in a low voice.*] Be- e my presence would always have reminding you of the years of happiness, and of—the life that d in the mill-race.

OS. Well, it was a kind thought— were always considerate. But it quite unnecessary to remain away hat account.—Come, sit here on sofa. [*They sit down.*] No, I as- you, the thought of Beata has pain for me. We speak of her y day. We feel almost as if she still one of the household.

ROLL. Do you really?

EB. [*lighting the lamp*]. Yes, in- we do.

ROS. It is quite natural. We were both so deeply attached to her. And both Rebec—both Miss West and I know that we did all that was possible for her in her affliction. We have nothing to reproach ourselves with.—So I feel nothing but a tranquil tenderness now at the thought of Beata.

KROLL. You dear, good people! Henceforward, I declare I shall come out and see you every day.

REB. [*seats herself in an arm chair*]. Mind, we shall expect you to keep your word.

ROS. [*with some hesitation*]. My dear Kroll—I wish very much that our intercourse had never been interrupted. Ever since we have known each other, you have seemed predestined to be my adviser—ever since I went to the University.

KROLL. Yes, and I have always been proud of the office. But is there anything particular just now——?

ROS. There are many things that I would give a great deal to talk over with you, quite frankly—straight from the heart.

REB. Ah! yes, Mr. Rosmer—that must be such a comfort—between old friends——

KROLL. Oh! I can tell you I have still more to talk to you about. I suppose you know I have turned a militant politician?

ROS. Yes, so you have. How did that come about?

KROLL. I was forced into it in spite of myself. It is impossible to stand idly looking on any longer. Now that the Radicals have unhappily come into power, it is high time something should be done,—so I have got our little group of friends in the town to

close up their ranks. I tell you it is high time!

REB. [*with a faint smile.*] Don't you think it may even be a little late?

KROLL. Unquestionably it would have been better if we had checked the stream at an earlier point in its course. But who could foresee what was going to happen? Certainly not I. [*Rises and walks up and down.*] But now I have had my eyes opened once for all; for now the spirit of revolt has crept into the school itself.

ROS. Into the school? Surely not into your school?

KROLL. I tell you it has—into my own school. What do you think? It has come to my knowledge that the sixth-form boys—a number of them at any rate—have been keeping up a secret society for over six months; and they take in Mortensgard's paper!

REB. The "Beacon"?

KROLL. Yes, nice mental sustenance for future government officials, is it not? But the worst of it is that it's all the cleverest boys in the form that have banded together in this conspiracy against me. Only the dunces at the bottom of the class have kept out of it.

REB. Do you take this so very much to heart, Rector?

KROLL. Do I take it to heart! To be so thwarted and opposed in the work of my whole life! [*Lower.*] But I could almost say I don't care about the school—for there is worse behind. [*Looks around.*] I suppose no one can hear us?

REB. Oh no, of course not.

KROLL. Well, then, I must tell you that dissension and revolt have crept into my own house—into my own quiet home. They have destroyed the pea of my family life.

ROS. [*rises*]. What! Into your o house——?

REB. [*goes over to the* RECTOR]. M dear Rector, what has happened?

KROLL. Would you believe that r own children—— In short, it Laurits that is the ringleader of t school conspiracy; and Hilda has e broidered a red portfolio to keep t "Beacon" in.

ROS. I should certainly never ha dreamt that, in your own house——

KROLL. No, who would have drea of such a thing? In my house, t very home of obedience and order where one will, and one only, has ways prevailed——

REB. How does your wife take this?

KROLL. Why, that is the most credible part of it. My wife, w all her life long has shared my op ions and concurred in my views, bo in great things and small—she is ac ally inclined to side with the childr on many points. And she blames for what has happened. She says tyrannise over the children. As if weren't necessary to——. Well, y see how my house is divided agai itself. But of course I say as lit about it as possible. Such things best kept quiet. [*Wanders up room.*] Ah, well, well, well.

[*Stands at the window with hands behind his back, and looks ou*

REB. [*comes up close to* ROS. *says rapidly and in a low voice, that the* RECTOR *does not hear h* Do it now!

ROS. [*also in a low voice*]. Not t evening.

EB. [*as before*]. Yes, just this ing.

Goes to table and busies herself the lamp.]

ROLL [*comes forward*]. Well, my Rosmer, now you know how the it of the age has overshadowed my domestic and my official life. am I to refrain from combating pernicious, subversive, anarchic t, with any weapons I can lay my ls on? Fight it I will, trust me that; both with tongue and pen.

OS. Have you any hope of stem- the tide in that way?

ROLL. At any rate I shall have my duty as a citizen in defense ne State. And I hold it the duty very right-minded man with an of patriotism to do likewise. In —that was my principal reason for ng out here this evening.

OS. Why, my dear Kroll, what do mean——? What can I——?

ROLL. You can stand by your old ds. Do as we do. Lend a hand, all your might.

EB. But, Rector Kroll, you know Rosmer's distaste for public life.

ROLL. He must get over his dis- .—You don't keep abreast of gs, Rosmer. You bury yourself here, with your historical col- ons. Far be it from me to speak spectfully of family trees and so ; but, unfortunately, this is no for hobbies of that sort. You ot imagine the state things are in, ver the country. There is hardly gle accepted idea that hasn't been d topsy-turvy. It will be a gi- c task to get all the errors rooted gain.

s. I have no doubt of it. But I am the last man to undertake such a task.

REB. And besides, I think Mr. Rosmer has come to take a wider view of life than he used to.

KROLL [*with surprise*]. Wider?

REB. Yes; or freer, if you like—less one-sided.

KROLL. What is the meaning of this? Rosmer—surely you are not so weak as to be influenced by the accident that the leaders of the mob have won a temporary advantage?

ROS. My dear Kroll, you know how little I understand of politics. But I confess it seems to me that within the last few years people are beginning to show greater independence of thought.

KROLL. Indeed! And you take it for granted that that must be an improvement! But in any case you are quite mistaken, my friend. Just inquire a little into the opinions that are current among the Radicals, both out here and in the town. They are neither more nor less than the wisdom that's retailed in the "Beacon."

REB. Yes; Mortensgard has great influence over many people hereabouts.

KROLL. Yes, just think of it! A man of his foul antecedents—a creature that was turned out of his place as a schoolmaster on account of his immoral life! A fellow like that sets himself up as a leader of the people! And succeeds too! Actually succeeds! I hear he is going to enlarge his paper. I know on good authority that he is on the lookout for a capable assistant.

REB. I wonder that you and your friends don't set up an opposition to him.

KROLL. That is the very thing we

are going to do. We have today bought the "County News"; there was no difficulty about the money question. But ——[*Turns to* ROSMER]. Now I come to my real errand. The difficulty lies in the conduct of the paper—the editing —— Tell me, Rosmer,—don't you feel it your duty to undertake it, for the sake of the good cause?

ROS. [*almost in consternation*]. I?

REB. Oh, how can you think of such a thing?

KROLL. I can quite understand your horror of public meetings, and your reluctance to expose yourself to their tender mercies. But an editor's work is less conspicuous, or rather——

ROS. No, no, my dear friend, you must not ask me to do this.

KROLL. I should be quite willing to try my own hand at that style of work too; but I couldn't possibly manage it. I have such a multitude of irons in the fire already. But for you, with no profession to tie you down—— Of course the rest of us would give you as much help as we could.

ROS. I cannot, Kroll. I am not fitted for it.

KROLL. Not fitted? You said the same thing when your father preferred you to the living here—

ROS. And I was right. That was why I resigned it.

KROLL. Oh, if only you are as good an editor as you were a clergyman, we shall not complain.

ROS. My dear Kroll—I tell you once for all—I cannot do it.

KROLL. Well, at any rate, you will lend us your name.

ROS. My name?

KROLL. Yes, the mere name, Johannes Rosmer, will be a great thing for the paper. We others are looked up as confirmed partisans—indeed I h I am denounced as a desperate fana —so that if we work the paper in own names, we can't reckon upon making much way among the m guided masses. You, on the contra have always kept out of the fig Everybody knows and values your manity and uprightness—your delica of mind—your unimpeachable hono And then the prestige of your forn position as a clergyman still clings you; and, to crown all, you have y grand old family name!

ROS. Oh, my name——

KROLL [*points to the portraits*]. R mers of Rosmersholm—clergymen soldiers; government officials of h place and trust; gentlemen to finger-tips, every man of them—a fa ily that for nearly two centuries held its place as the first in the distr [*Lays his hand on* ROSMER'S *shoulde* Rosmer—you owe it to yourself and the traditions of your race to take y share in guarding all that has hithe been held sacred in our society. [*Tu round.*] What do you say, Miss We

REB. [*laughing softly, as if to self*]. My dear Rector—I can't you how ludicrous all this seems me.

KROLL. What do you say? L crous?

REB. Yes, ludicrous. For you m let me tell you frankly——

ROS. [*quickly*]. No, no—be qu Not just now!

KROLL [*looks from one to the oth* My dear friends, what on earth [*Interrupting himself.*] H'm.

[MADAME HELSETH *appears in doorway on the right.*]

[ADAM H. There's a man out in the hen passage that says he wants to the Pastor.

OS. [*relieved*]. Ah, very well. Ask to come in.

[ADAM H. Into the sitting-room?

OS. Yes, of course.

[ADAM H. But he looks scarcely the of man to bring into the sitting-n.

EB. Why, what does he look like, lame Helseth?

[ADAM H. Well, he's not much to at, Miss, and that's a fact.

OS. Did he not give his name?

[ADAM H. Yes—I think he said his e was Hekman or something of sort.

OS. I know nobody of that name.

ADAM H. And then he said he was d Uldric, too.

OS. [*in surprise*]. Ulric Hetman! that it?

ADAM H. Yes, so it was—Hetman.

ROLL. I've surely heard that name re—

EB. Wasn't that the name he used rite under—that strange being—

OS. [*to* KROLL]. It is Ulric Bren-pseudonym.

ROLL. That black sheep Ulric del's—of course it is.

EB. Then he is still alive.

OS. I heard he had joined a com- of strolling players.

ROLL. When last *I* heard of him, as in the House of Correction.

OS. Ask him to come in, Madame eth.

ADAM H. Oh, very well. [*She out.*]

ROLL. Are you really going to let an like that into your house?

ROS. You know he was once my tutor.

KROLL. Yes, I know he went and crammed your head full of revolutionary ideas, until your father showed him the door—with his horsewhip.

ROS. [*with a touch of bitterness*]. Father was a martinet at home as well as in his regiment.

KROLL. Thank him in his grave for that, my dear Rosmer.—Well!

[MADAM HELSETH *opens the door on the right for* ULRIC BRENDEL, *and then withdraws, shutting the door behind him. He is a handsome man, with grey hair and beard; somewhat gaunt, but active and well set up. He is dressed like a common tramp; threadbare frock-coat; worn-out shoes; no shirt visible. He wears an old pair of black gloves, and carries a soft, greasy felt hat under his arm, and a walking-stick in his hand.*

[ULRIC BRENDEL *hesitates at first, then goes quickly up to the* RECTOR, *and holds out his hand*]. Good evening, Johannes!

KROLL. Excuse me——

BREN. Did you expect to see me again? And within these hated walls, too?

KROLL. Excuse me—— [*Pointing.*] There——

BREN. [*turns*]. Right. There he is. Johannes—my boy—my best-beloved ——!

ROS. [*takes his hand*]. My old teacher.

BREN. Notwithstanding certain painful memories, I could not pass my Rosmersholm without paying you a flying visit.

ROS. You are heartily welcome here now. Be sure of that.

BREN. Ah, this charming lady——? [*Bows.*] Mrs. Rosmer, of course.

ROS. Miss West.

BREN. A near relation, no doubt. And yonder unknown——? A brother of the cloth, I see.

ROS. Rector Kroll.

BREN. Kroll? Kroll? Wait a bit —Weren't you a student of philology in your young days?

KROLL. Of course I was.

BREN. Why *Donnerwetter,* then I knew you!

KROLL. Pardon me——

BREN. Weren't you——

KROLL. Pardon me—

BREN. ——one of those myrmidons of morality that got me turned out of the Debating Club?

KROLL. Very likely. But I disclaim any closer acquaintanceship.

BREN. Well, well! *Nach Belieben, Herr Doctor.* It's all one to me. Ulric Brendel remains the man he is for all that.

REB. You are on your way into town, Mr. Brendel?

BREN. You have hit it, gracious lady. At certain intervals, I am constrained to strike a blow for existence. It goes against the grain; but—*efin*—imperious necessity——

ROS. Oh, but, my dear Mr. Brendel, you must allow me to help you. In one way or another, I am sure——

BREN. Ha, such a proposal to me! Would you desecrate the bond that unites us? Never, Johannes, never!

ROS. But what do you think of doing in town? Believe me, you won't find it easy to——

BREN. Leave that to me, my boy. The die is cast. Simple as I stand here before you. I am engaged in a comprehensive campaign—more comprehensive than all my previous excursions put together. [*To* RECTOR KROLL.] Dare I ask the Herr Professor—*unters uns*—have you a tolerably decent, reputable, and commodious Public Hall in your estimable city?

KROLL. The hall of the Workmen's Society is the largest.

BREN. And has the Herr Professor any official influence in this doubtless most beneficial Society?

KROLL. I have nothing to do with it.

REB. [*to* BRENDEL]. You should apply to Peter Mortensgard.

BREN. Pardon, madame—what sort of an idiot is he?

ROS. What makes you take him for an idiot?

BREN. Can't I tell at once by the name that it belongs to a plebian?

KROLL. I did not expect that answer.

BREN. But I will conquer my reluctance. There is no alternative. When a man stands—as I do—at the turning-point in his career——. It is settled. I will approach this individual — will open personal negotiations——

ROS. Are you really and seriously standing at a turning-point?

BREN. Surely my own boy knows that, stand he where he may, Ulric Brendel always stands really and seriously.—Yes, Johannes, I am going to put on a new man—to throw off the modest reserve I have hitherto maintained——

ROS. How——?

BREN. I am about to take hold of life with a strong hand; to step forth to assert myself. We live in a temp

ıs, an equinoctial age.—I am about ay my mite on the altar of Eman- ation.

KROLL. You, too?

REN. [*to them all*]. Is the local lic at all familiar with my occas- l writings?

KROLL. No, I must candidly confess —

EB. I have read several of them. adopted father had them in his li- ry.

REN. Fair lady, then you have ted your time. For, let me tell , they are so much rubbish.

EB. Indeed!

REN. What you have read, yes. really important works no man or an knows. No one—except my-

EB. How does that happen?

REN. Because they are not writ-

OS. But, my dear Mr. Brendel——

REN. You know, my Johannes, that n a bit of a Sybarite—a *Feinsch- ker*. I have been so all my days. e to take my pleasures in solitude; then I enjoy them doubly—ten- . So, you see, when golden dreams ended and enwrapped me—when dizzy, far-reaching thoughts were in me, and wafted me aloft on sustaining pinions—I bodied forth in poems, visions, pictures he rough, as it were, you under- d.

OS. Yes, yes.

RENDEL. Oh, what pleasures, what xications I have enjoyed in my ! The mysterious bliss of creation the rough, as I said—applause, itude, renown, the wreath of bays these I have garnered with full hands quivering with joy. I have sated myself, in my secret thoughts, with a rapture—oh! so intense, so inebriating——!

KROLL. H'm.

ROS. But you have written nothing down?

BREN. Not a word. The soulless toil of the scrivener has always aroused a sickening aversion in me. And besides, why should I profane my own ideals, when I could enjoy them in their purity by myself? But now they shall be offered up. I assure you I feel like a mother who delivers her tender daughters into their bridegroom's arms. But I will offer them up, none the less. I will sacrifice them on the altar of Emancipation. A series of carefully elaborated lectures—over the whole country——'

REB. [*with animation*]. This is noble of you, Mr. Brendel! You are yielding up the dearest thing you possess.

ROS. The only thing.

REB. [*looking significantly at* ROSMER]. How many are there who do as much—who dare do as much.

ROS. [*returning the look*]. Who knows?

BREN. My audience is touched. That does my heart good—and steels my will. So now I will proceed to action. Stay—one thing more. [*To the* RECTOR.] Can you tell me, Herr Preceptor,—is there such a thing as a Temperance Society in the town? A Total Abstinence Society? I need scarcely ask.

KROLL. Yes, there is. I am the president, at your service.

BREN. I saw it in your face! Well, it is by no means impossible that I

may come to you and enroll myself as a member for a week.

KROLL. Excuse me—we don't receive members by the week.

BREN. *A la bonne heure,* Herr Pedagogue. Ulric Brendel has never forced himself into that sort of Society. [*Turns.*] But I must not prolong my stay in this house, so rich in memories. I must get on to the town and select a suitable lodging. I presume there is a decent hotel in the place.

REB. Mayn't I offer you anything before you go?

BREN. Of what sort, gracious lady?

REB. A cup of tea, or——

BREN. I thank my bountiful hostess—but I am always loath to trespass on private hospitality. [*Waves his hand.*] Farewell, gentlefolks all! [*Goes towards the door, but turns again.*] Oh, by the way—Johannes—Pastor Rosmer—for the sake of our ancient friendship, will you do your former teacher a service?

BREN. Good. Then lend me—for a day or two—a starched shirt—with cuffs.

ROS. Nothing else?

BREN. For you see I am travelling on foot—at present. My trunk is being sent after me.

ROS. Quite so. But is there nothing else?

BREN. Well, do you know—perhaps you could spare me an oldish, well-worn summer overcoat.

ROS. Yes, yes; certainly I can.

BREN. And if a respectable pair of boots happened to go along with the coat——

ROS. That we can manage, too. As soon as you let us know your address, we will send the things in.

BREN. Not on any account. Pra do not let me give you any trouble I will take the bagatelles with me.

ROS. As you please. Come upstai with me then.

REB. Let me go. Madam Helse and I will see to it.

BREN. I cannot think of sufferi this distinguished lady to——

REB. Oh, nonsense! Come alon Mr. Brendel.

[*She goes out to the right.*]

ROS. [*detaining him*]. Tell me— there nothing else I can do for you?

BREN. Upon my word, I know nothing more. Well, yes, damn it —now that I think of it——! Joha nes, do you happen to have eig crowns in your pocket?

ROS. Let me see. [*Opens his purse* Here are two ten-crown notes.

BREN. Well, well, never mind! can take them. I can always get the changed in the town. Thanks in t meantime. Remember it was two te ners you lent me. Goodnight my ov dear boy. Good-night, respected Si

[*Goes out to the right.* ROSM *takes leave of him, and shuts the do behind him.*]

KROLL. Merciful Heaven—so that the Ulric Brendel people once expect such great things of.

ROS. [*quietly*]. At least he has h the courage to live his life his o way. I don't think that is such a sm matter, either.

KROLL. What? A life like his! almost believe he has it in him to tu your head afresh.

ROS. Oh, no. My mind is qu clear now, upon all points.

KROLL. I wish I could believe it

r Rosmer. You are so terribly im-
ssionable.

os. Let us sit down. I want to
to you.

Kroll. Yes, let us.

They seat themselves on the sofa.]

os. [*after a slight pause*]. Don't
think we lead a pleasant and com-
able life here?

Kroll. Yes, your life is pleasant
comfortable now—and peaceful.
have found yourself a home, Ros-
. And I have lost mine.

os. My dear friend, don't say that.
wound will heal again in time.

Kroll. Never; never. The barb
always rankle. Things can never
as they were.

os. Listen to me, Kroll. We have
fast friends for many and many
ear. Does it seem to you conceiv-
that our friendship should ever
o wreck?

Kroll. I know of nothing in the
ld that could estrange us. What
that into your head?

os. You attach such paramount
ortance to uniformity of opinions
views.

Kroll. No doubt; but we two are
ractical agreement—at any rate on
great essential questions.

os. [*in a low voice*]. No; not now.

Kroll [*tries to spring up*]. What
is?

os. [*holding him*]. No, you must
till—I entreat you, Kroll.

Kroll. What can this mean? I
t understand you. Speak plainly.

os. A new summer has blossomed
ny soul. I see with eyes grown
g again. And so now I stand——

Kroll. Where—where, Rosmer?

os. Where your children stand.

Kroll. You? You! Impossible! Where do you say you stand?

Ros. On the same side as Laurits and Hilda.

Kroll [*bows his head*]. An apostate! Johannes Rosmer an apostate!

Ros. I should have felt so happy—so intensely happy, in what you call my apostasy. But, nevertheless, I suffered deeply; for I knew it would be a bitter sorrow to you.

Kroll. Rosmer—Rosmer! I shall never get over this! [*Looks gloomily at him*]. To think that you, too, can find it in your heart to help on the work of corruption and ruin in this unhappy land.

Ros. It is the work of emancipation I wish to help on.

Kroll. Oh, yes, I know. That is what both the tempters and their victims call it. But do you think there is any emancipation to be expected from the spirit that is now poisoning our social life?

Ros. I am not in love with the spirit that is in the ascendant, nor with either of the contending parties. I will try to bring together men from both sides—as many as I can—and to unite them as closely as possible. I will devote my life and all my energies to this one thing—the creation of a true democracy in this country.

Kroll. So you don't think we have democracy enough already! For my part is seems to me we are all in a fair way to be dragged down into the mire, where hitherto only the mob have been able to thrive.

Ros. That is just why I want to awaken the democracy to its true task.

Kroll. What task?

ROS. That of making all the people of this country noble——

KROLL. All the people——?

ROS. As many as possible, at any rate.

KROLL. By what means?

ROS. By freeing their minds and purifying their wills.

KROLL. You are a dreamer, Rosmer. Will you free them? Will you purify them?

ROS. No, my dear friend—I will only try to arouse them to their task. They themselves must accomplish it.

KROLL. And you think they can?

ROS. Yes.

KROLL. By their own strength?

ROS. Yes, precisely by their own strength. There is no other.

KROLL [*rises*]. Is this becoming language for a priest?

ROS. I am no longer a priest.

KROLL. Well but—the faith of your fathers——?

ROS. It is mine no more.

KROLL. No more——!

ROS. [*rises*]. I have given it up. I had to give it up, Kroll.

KROLL [*controlling his agitation*]. Oh, indeed—— Yes, yes, yes. I suppose one thing goes with another. Was this, then, your reason for leaving the Church?

ROS. Yes. As soon as my mind was clear—as soon as I was quite certain that this was no passing attack of scepticism, but a conviction I neither could or would shake off—then I at once left the Church.

KROLL. So this has been your state of mind all this time! And we—your friends—have heard nothing of it. Rosmer—Rosmer—how could you hide the miserable truth from us!

ROS. Because it seemed to me matter that concerned myself alone And besides, I did not wish to giv you and my other friends any need less pain. I thought I might live o here, as before, quietly, serenely, hap pily. I wanted to read, to bury my self in all the studies that until the had been sealed books to me. I wante to make myself thoroughly at home i the great world of truth and freedo that has been revealed to me.

KROLL. Apostate! Every wor proves it. But why, then, do you con fess your secret apostasy after al And why just at this time?

ROS. You yourself have driven m to it, Kroll.

KROLL. I? Have I driven you—

ROS. When I heard of your violen on the platform—when I read all th rancorous speeches you made—you bitter onslaughts on your opponents- the contemptuous invectives you heap on them—oh, Kroll, to think that yo ——you—could come to this!—the my duty stood imperatively before m Men are growing evil in this struggl Peace and joy and mutual forbearan must once more enter into our sou That is why I now intend to step fo ward and openly avow myself for wh I am. I, too, will try my strengt Could not you—from your side—he me in this, Kroll?

KROLL. Never so long as I live w I make peace with the subversi forces in society.

ROS. Then at least let us fight w honourable weapons—since fight must.

KROLL. Whoever is not with me the essential things of life, him I

ger know. I owe him no considera-
n.

Ros. Does that apply to me, too?

Kroll. It is you that have broken
h me, Rosmer.

Ros. Is this a breach then?

Kroll. This! It is a breach with
who have hitherto been your
ends. You must take the conse-
nces.

[Rebecca West *enters from the
ht, and opens the door wide.*

Reb. There now; he is on his way
his great sacrifice. And now we
go to supper. Will you come in,
tor?

Kroll [*takes up his hat*]. Good-
ht, Miss West. I have nothing more
do here.

Reb. [*eagerly*]. What is this? [*Shuts
door and comes forward.*] Have
spoken?

Ros. He knows everything.

Kroll. We will not let you go,
mer. We will force you to come
k to us.

Ros. I can never stand where I did.

Kroll. We shall see. You are not
man to endure standing alone.

Ros. I shall not be so completely
ne after all.—There are two of us
ear the loneliness together.

Kroll. Ah——. [*A suspicion ap-
rs in his face.*] That too! Beata's
ds——!

Ros. Beata's——?

Kroll [*shaking off the thought*].
no—that was vile. Forgive me.

Ros. What? What do you mean?

Kroll. Don't ask. Bah! Forgive
Good-bye!

[*Goes towards the entrance door.*]

Ros. [*follows him*]. Kroll! Our friendship must not end like this. I will come and see you tomorrow.

Kroll [*in the hall, turns*]. You shall never cross my threshold again.

[*He takes up his stick and goes out.*]

[Rosmer *stands for a moment in the doorway; then shuts the door and walks up to the table.*

Ros. It does not matter, Rebecca. We will see it out, we two faithful friends—you and I.

Reb. What do you think he meant when he said "That was vile"?

Ros. Don't trouble about that, dear. He himself didn't believe what was in his mind. Tomorrow I will go and see him. Good-night!

Reb. Are you going upstairs so early tonight? After this?

Ros. Tonight as usual. I feel so relieved, now it is over. You see—I am quite calm, Rebecca. Do you, too, take it calmly. Good-night!

Reb. Good-night, dear friend! Sleep well!

[Rosmer *goes out by the hall door; his steps are heard ascending the staircase.*]

[Rebecca *goes and pulls a bell-rope near the stove. Shortly after,* Madam Helseth *enters from the right.*]

Reb. You can take away the supper things, Madam Helseth. Mr. Rosmer doesn't want anything, and the Rector has gone home.

Madam H. Has the Rector gone? What was the matter with him?

Reb. [*takes up her crochet work*]. He said he thought there was a heavy storm brewing—

Madam H. What a strange notion! There's not a cloud in the sky this evening.

REB. Let us hope he mayn't meet the White Horse! I'm afraid we shall soon be hearing something from the bogies now.

MADAM H. Lord forgive you, Miss! Don't say such awful things.

REB. Well, well, well—

MADAM H. [*softly*]. Do you really think some one is to go soon, Miss?

REB. No; why should I think so? But there are so many sorts of white horses in this world, Madam Helseth. —Well, good-night. I shall go to my room now.

MADAM H. Good-night, Miss.

[REBECCA *goes out to the right, with her crochet-work.*]

MADAM H. [*turns the lamp down, shaking her head and muttering to herself*]. Lord—Lord! That Miss West! The things she does say!

ACT II

SCENE—JOHANNES ROSMER'S *study. Entrance door on the left. At the back, a doorway with a curtain drawn aside, leading into* ROSMER'S *bedroom. On the right a window, and in front of it a writing-table covered with books and papers. Bookshelves and cases round the room. The furniture is simple. On the left, an old-fashioned sofa, with a table in front of it.*

JOHANNES ROSMER, *in an indoor jacket, is sitting in a high-backed chair at the writing-table. He is cutting and turning over the leaves of a pamphlet, and reading a little here and there.*

There is a knock at the door on the left.

ROS. [*without moving*]. Come in.

REB. [*enters, dressed in a morning gown*]. Good morning.

ROS. [*turning the leaves of the pamphlet*]. Good morning, dear. D you want anything?

REB. I only wanted to hear if yo had slept well.

ROS. Oh, I have had a beautifu peaceful night. [*Turns.*] And you?

REB. Oh, yes, thanks — toward morning—

ROS. I don't know when I hav felt so light-hearted as I do now. am so glad I managed to speak out a last.

REB. Yes, it is a pity you remaine silent so long, Rosmer.

ROS. I don't understand mysel how I could be such a coward.

REB. It wasn't precisely coward ice—

ROS. Oh, yes, dear—when I thin the thing out, I can see there was touch of cowardice at the bottom of i

REB. All the braver, then, to mak the plunge at last. [*Sits on a chair the writing-table, close to him.*] B now I want to tell you something have done—and you mustn't be vex with me about it.

ROS. Vexed? How can you thin —?

REB. Well, it was perhaps rath indiscreet of me but—

ROS. Let me hear what it was.

REB. Yesterday evening, wh Ulric Brendel was leaving—I ga him a note to Peter Mortensgard.

ROS. [*a little doubtful*]. Why, n dear Rebecca—Well, what did y say?

REB. I said that he would be doi you a service if he would look aft that unfortunate creature a little a help him in any way he could.

ROS. Dear, you shouldn't ha done that. You have only done Bre

harm. And Mortensgard is not a
ı I care to have anything to do
ı. You know of that old episode
ween us.

EB. But don't you think it would
as well to make it up with him
in?

OS. I? With Mortensgard? In
ıt way do you mean?

EB. Well, you know you can't
absolutely secure now—after this
ıch with your old friends.

OS. [*looks at her and shakes his
d*]. Can you really believe that
ll or any of the others would try to
e revenge on me? That they would
apable of—?

EB. In the first heat of anger,
r—. No one can be sure. I think
fter the way the Rector took it—

OS. Oh, you ought surely to know
better than that. Kroll is a gen-
ıan, to the backbone. I am going
town this afternoon to talk to
. I will talk to them all. Oh, you
l see how easily it will all go—

ADAM HELSETH *appears at the
r on the left.*

EB. [*rises*]. What is it, Madam
seth?

ADAM H. Rector Kroll is down-
rs in the hall.

OS. [*rises hastily*]. Kroll!

EB. The Rector! Is it possible—

ADAM H. He wants to know if
nay come upstairs, Mr. Rosmer.

OS. [*to* REBECCA]. What did I
you?—Of course he may. [*Goes
he door and calls down the stairs.*]
ıe up, dear friend! I am delighted
ee you.

ROSMER *stands holding the door
ı.* MADAM HELSETH *goes out.*
ECCA *draws the curtain before the doorway at the back, and then begins arranging things in the room.*]

[RECTOR KROLL *enters, with his hat in his hand.*]

ROS. [*with quiet emotion*]. I knew it couldn't be the last time—

KROLL. I see things today in quite a different light from yesterday.

ROS. Ah! yes, Kroll; I was sure you would, now that you have had time to reflect.

KROLL. You misunderstand me completely. [*Lays his hat on the table beside the sofa.*] It is of the utmost importance that I should speak to you, alone.

ROS. Why may not Miss West—?

REB. No no, Mr. Rosmer. I will go.

KROLL [*looks at her from head to foot*]. And I must ask Miss West to excuse my coming at such an untimely hour—taking her unawares before she has had time to—

REB. [*surprised*]. What do you mean? Do you see any harm in my wearing a morning gown about the house?

KROLL. Heaven forbid! I know nothing of what may now be customary at Rosmersholm.

ROS. Why, Knoll—you are not yourself today!

REB. Allow me to wish you good morning, Rector Kroll. [*She goes out to the left.*]

KROLL. By your leave— [*Sits on the sofa.*]

ROS. Yes, Kroll, sit down, and let us talk things out amicably.

[*He seats himself in a chair directly opposite to the* RECTOR.]

KROLL. I haven't closed an eye since yesterday. I have been lying thinking and thinking all night.

Ros. And what do you say to things today?

Kroll. It will be a long story, Rosmer. Let me begin with a sort of introduction. I can give you news of Ulric Brendel.

Ros. Has he called on you?

Kroll. No. He took up his quarters in a low public-house—in the lowest company of course—and drank and stood treat as long as he had any money. Then he began abusing the whole company as a set of disreputable blackguards—and so far he was quite right—whereupon they thrashed him and pitched him out into the gutter.

Ros. So he is incorrigible after all.

Kroll. He had pawned the coat, too; but I am told that has been redeemed for him. Can you guess by whom?

Ros. Perhaps by you?

Kroll. No; by the distinguished Mr. Mortensgard.

Ros. Ah, indeed.

Kroll. I understand that Mr. Brendel's first visit was to the "idiot" and "plebian."

Ros. Well, it was lucky for him—

Kroll. To be sure it was. [*Leans over the table towards* Rosmer.] And that brings me to a matter it is my duty to warn you about, for our old—for our former friendship's sake.

Ros. My dear Kroll, what can that be?

Kroll. It is this: there are things going on behind your back in this house.

Ros. How can you think so? Is it Reb—is it Miss West you are aiming at?

Kroll. Precisely. I can quite understand it on her part. She has long been accustomed to have everything her own way here. But nevertheless—

Ros. My dear Kroll, you are utterly mistaken. She and I—we have no concealments from each other on any subject whatever.

Kroll. Has she told you, then that she has entered into correspondence with the editor of the "Beacon"

Ros. Oh, you are thinking of the few lines she sent by Ulric Brendel?

Kroll. Then you have found it out. And do you approve of her entering into relations with a scurrilous scribbler, who never lets a week pass without holding me up to ridicule, both as a schoolmaster and as a public man?

Ros. My dear Kroll, I don't suppose that side of the matter ever entered her head. And besides, of course she has full liberty of action, just as I have.

Kroll. Indeed? Ah, no doubt that follows from your new line of thought. For Miss West presumably shares your present standpoint.

Ros. Yes, she does. We two have worked our way forward in faithful comradeship.

Kroll [*looks at him and slowly shakes his head*]. Oh, you blind, deluded being!

Ros. *I*? Why do you say that?

Kroll. Because I dare not—I will not think the worst. No, no, let me say my say out—You really do value our friendship, Rosmer? And my respect too? Do you not?

Ros. I surely need not answer that question.

Kroll. Well, but there are other questions that do require an answer

full explanation on your part.—
ll you submit to a sort of investi-
ion—?

Ros. Investigation?

Kroll. Yes; will you let me ques-
n you about certain things it may
n you to be reminded of? You see
his apostasy of yours—well, this
ancipation, as you call it—is bound
with many things that for your
n sake you must explain to me.

Ros. My dear Kroll, ask what
stions you please. I have nothing
conceal.

Kroll. Then tell me—what do
think was the real, the ultimate
son why Beata put an end to her
?

Ros. Can you have any doubt on
subject. Or, rather, can you ask
reasons for what an unhappy, irre-
nsible invalid may do?

Kroll. Are you certain that Beata
completely irresponsible for her
ons? The doctors, at any rate,
e by no means convinced of it.

Ros. If the doctors had ever seen
as I have so often seen her, for
s and nights together, they would
e had no doubts.

Kroll. I had no doubts either—
.

Ros. Oh, no, unhappily, there
n't the smallest room for doubt. I
e told you of her wild frenzies of
ion—which she expected me to re-
. Oh, how they appalled me! And
her causeless, consuming self-re-
aches during the last few years.

Kroll. Yes, when she had learnt
she must remain childless all her

Ros. Yes, just think of that! Such
ble, haunting agony of mind about
a thing utterly beyond her control—! How could you call her responsible for her actions.

Kroll. H'm—. Can you remember whether you had any books in the house at that time treating of the rationale of marriage—according to the "advanced" ideas of the day?

Ros. I remember Miss West lending me a work of the kind. The Doctor left her his library, you know. But, my dear Kroll, you surely cannot suppose we were so reckless as to let my poor sick wife get hold of any such ideas? I can solemnly assure you that the fault was not ours. It was her own distempered brain that drove her into these wild aberrations.

Kroll. One thing at any rate I can tell you; and that is, that poor, overstrung, tortured Beata put an end to her life in order that you might live happily—live freely, and—after your own heart.

Ros. [*starts half up from his chair*]. What do you mean by that?

Kroll. Listen to me quietly, Rosmer; for now I can speak of it. In the last year of her life she came to me twice to pour forth all her anguish and despair.

Ros. On this same subject?

Kroll. No. The first time she came, it was to declare that you were on the road to perversion—that you were going to break with the faith of your fathers.

Ros. [*eagerly*]. What you say is impossible, Kroll. Absolutely impossible! You must be mistaken.

Kroll. And why?

Ros. Because while Beata was alive I was still wrestling with myself in doubt. And that fight I fought out

alone and in utter silence. I don't think even Rebecca—

KROLL. Rebecca?

ROS. Oh, well—Miss West. I call her Rebecca for convenience sake.

KROLL. So I have remarked.

ROS. So it is inconceivable to me how Beata could have got hold of the idea. And why did she not speak to me about it? She never did—she never said a single word.

KROLL. Poor creature—she begged and implored me to talk to you.

ROS. And why did you not?

KROLL. At that time I never for a moment doubted that she was out of her mind. Such an accusation against a man like you!—And then she came again—about a month later. This time she seemed outwardly calmer; but as she was going she said: "They may soon expect the White Horse at Rosmersholm now."

ROS. Yes, yes. The White Horse —she often spoke of it.

KROLL. And when I tried to divert her mind from such melancholy fancies, she only answered: "I have not long to live; for Johannes must marry Rebecca at once."

ROS. [*almost speechless*]. What do you say? I marry—?

KROLL. That was on a Thursday afternoon—. On the Saturday evening she threw herself from the bridge into the mill-race.

ROS. And you never warned us—!

KROLL. You know very well how often she used to say that she felt her end was near.

ROS. Yes, I know. But nevertheless—you should have warned us!

KROLL. I did think of it; but not till too late.

ROS. But afterwards, why did yo not—? Why have you said nothin about all this?

KROLL. What good would it hav done for me to come torturing an harassing you still further? I too all she said for mere wild, empty ra ings—until yesterday evening.

ROS. Then you have now change your opinion?

KROLL. Did not Beata see quit clearly when she declared you wer about to desert the faith of you fathers?

ROS. [*looks fixedly, straight befor him*]. I cannot understand it. It the most incomprehensible thing in th world.

KROLL. Incomprehensible or not— there it is. And now I ask you, Ro mer,—how much truth is there in h other accusation? The last one, mean.

ROS. Accusation? Was that an a cusation?

KROLL. Perhaps you did not noti the way she worded it. She had to g she said—why?

ROS. In order that I might mar Rebecca—

KROLL. These were not precisel her words. Beata used a different e pression. She said: "I have not lon to live; for Johannes must mar Rebecca at once."

ROS. [*looks at him for a momen then rises*]. Now I understand yo Kroll.

KROLL. And what then? What your answer?

ROS. [*still quiet and self-restrained* To such an unheard of—? The onl fitting answer would be to point to th door.

Kroll [*rises*]. Well and good.
Ros. [*stands in front of him*]. Lis- to me. For more than a year— r since Beata left us—Rebecca West I have lived alone here in Ros- sholm. During all that time you e known of Beata's accusation inst us. But I have never for a ment noticed that you disapproved Rebecca's living in my house.
Kroll. I did not know till yester- evening that it was an unbeliev- man who was living with an— ncipated woman.
Ros. Ah—! Then you do not be- e that purity of mind is to be nd among the unbelieving and the ncipated? You do not believe that rality may be an instinctive law their nature!
Kroll. I have no great faith in the rality that is not founded on the hings of the Church.
Ros. And you mean this to apply Rebecca and me? To the relation ween us two—?
Kroll. Not even out of considera- for you two can I depart from opinion that there is no unfath- ble gulf between free thought and 'm—
Ros. And what?
Kroll. —and free love,—since you have it.
Ros. [*in a low voice*]. And you are ashamed to say this to me! You, have known me from my earliest th!
Kroll. For that very reason. I w how easily you are influenced the people you associate with. And Rebecca of yours—well, Miss st then—we really know little or ing about her. In short, Rosmer —I will not give you up. And you— you must try to save yourself in time.

Ros. Save myself? How—?

[Madam Helseth *peeps in at the door on the left.*]

Ros. What do you want?

Madam H. I wanted to ask Miss West to step downstairs.

Ros. Miss West is not up here.

Madam H. Isn't she ? [*Looks round the room.*] Well, that's strange. [*She goes.*]

Ros. You were saying—?

Kroll. Listen to me. I am not going to inquire too closely into the secret history of what went on here in Beata's lifetime—and may still be going on. I know that your marriage was a most unhappy one; and I suppose that must be taken as some sort of excuse—

Ros. Oh, how little you really know me—!

Kroll. Don't interrupt me. What I mean is this: if your present mode of life with Miss West is to continue, it is absolutely necessary that the change of views—the unhappy back-sliding—brought about by her evil influence, should be hushed up. Let me speak! Let me speak! I say, if the worst comes to the worst, in Heaven's name think and believe whatever you like about everything under the sun. But you must keep your views to yourself. These things are purely personal matters, after all. There is no need to proclaim them from the housetops.

Ros. I feel it an absolute necessity to get out of a false and equivocal position.

Kroll. But you have a duty towards the traditions of your race, Rosmer! Remember that! Rosmersholm

has, so to speak, radiated morality and order from time immemorial—yes, and respectful conformity to all that is accepted and sanctioned by the best people. The whole district has taken its stamp from Rosmersholm. It would lead to deplorable, irremediable confusion if it were known that you had broken with what I may call the hereditary idea of the house of Rosmer.

Ros. My dear Kroll, I cannot see the matter in that light. I look upon it as my imperative duty to spread a little light and gladness here, where the Rosmer family has from generation to generation been a centre of darkness and oppression.

Kroll [*looks at him severely*]. Yes, that would be a worthy life-work for the last of your race! No, Rosmer; let such things alone; you are the last man for such a task. You were born to be a quiet student.

Ros. Perhaps so. But for once in a way I mean to bear my part in the battle of life.

Kroll. And do you know what that battle of life will mean for you? It will mean a life-and-death struggle with all your friends.

Ros. [*quietly*]. They cannot all be such fanatics as you.

Kroll. You are a credulous creature, Rosmer. An inexperienced creature, too. You have no conception of the overwhelming storm that will burst upon you.

[Madam Helseth *looks in at the door on the left.*]

Madam H. Miss West wants to know—

Ros. What is it?

Madam H. There's a man downstairs wanting to have a word with th Pastor.

Ros. Is it the man who was her yesterday evening?

Madam H. No, it's that Mortens gard.

Ros. Mortensgard?

Kroll. Aha! So it has come t this, has it?—Already!

Ros. What does he want with me Why didn't you send him away?

Madam H. Miss West said I wa to ask if he might come upstairs.

Ros. Tell him I'm engaged—

Kroll [*to* Madam Helseth]. Le him come up, Madam Helseth [Madam Helseth *goes.*]

Kroll [*taking up his hat*]. I re tire from the field—for the momen But the main battle has yet to b fought.

Ros. On my honour, Kroll—I hav nothing whatever to do with Mortens gard.

Kroll. I do not believe you. O no subject and in no relation whatev will I henceforth believe you. It war to the knife now. We will t whether we cannot disarm you.

Ros. Oh, Kroll—how low—ho very low you have sunk!

Kroll. I? And you think you hav the right to say that to me! Remem ber Beata!

Ros. Still harping upon that?

Kroll. No. You must solve th enigma of the mill-race according your own conscience—if you have an thing of the sort left.

[Peter Mortensgard *enters soft and quietly from the left. He is small, wiry man with thin reddish ha and beard.*

Kroll [*with a look of hatred*]. A

e we have the "Beacon"—burning Rosmersholm! [*Buttons his coat.*] ll, now I can no longer hesitate at course to steer.

IORT. [*deferentially*]. The "Beacon" y always be relied upon to light the tor home.

KROLL. Yes; you have long shown r good-will. To be sure there's a mandment about bearing false wit- s against your neighbor—

IORT. Rector Kroll need not in- ict me in the commandments.

KROLL. Not even in the seventh? OS. Kroll——!

IORT. If I needed instruction, it ld rather be the Pastor's business.

KROLL [*with covert sarcasm*]. The tor's? Oh, yes, unquestionably tor Rosmer is the man for that.— d luck to your conference, gentle- n!

Goes out and slams the door behind .]

OS. [*keeps his eyes fixed on the ed door and says to himself*]. Well, —so be it then. [*Turns.*] Will be good enough to tell me, Mr. rtensgard, what brings you out here ne?

IORT. It was really Miss West I e to see. I wanted to thank her the friendly note I received from yesterday.

OS. I know she wrote to you. e you seen her then?

IORT. Yes, for a short time. *iles slightly.*] I hear there has a certain change of views out at Rosmersholm.

OS. My views are altered in many ects. I might almost say in all.

ORT. So Miss West told me; and 's why she thought I had better come up and talk things over with the Pastor.

ROS. What things, Mr. Mortensgard.

MORT. May I announce in the "Beacon" that there has been a change in your views—that you have joined the party of freedom and progress?

ROS. Certainly you may. In fact, I beg you to make the announcement.

MORT. Then it shall appear in tomorrow's paper. It will cause a great sensation when it's known that Pastor Rosmer of Rosmersholm is prepared to take up arms for the cause of light, in that sense, too.

ROS. I don't quite understand you.

MORT. I mean that the moral position of our party is greatly strengthened whenever we gain an adherent of serious, Christian principles.

ROS. [*with some surprise*]. Then you do not know——? Did not Miss West tell you that, too?

MORT. What, Pastor Rosmer? Miss West was in a great hurry. She said I was to go upstairs and hear the rest from yourself.

ROS. Well, in that case I may tell you that I have emancipated myself entirely, and on every side. I have broken with all the dogmas of the Church. Henceforth they are nothing to me.

MORT. [*looks at him in amazement*]. Well—if the skies were to fall I couldn't be more——! Pastor Rosmer himself announces——.

ROS. Yes, I now stand where you have stood for many years. That, too, you may announce in the "Beacon" tomorrow.

MORT. That too? No, my dear Pastor—excuse me—I don't think it

would be wise to touch on that side of the matter.

ROS. Not touch on it?

MORT. Not at present, I mean.

ROS. I don't understand——

MORT. Well, you see, Pastor Rosmer—you probably don't know the ins and outs of things so well as I do. But, since you have come over to the party of freedom—and, as I hear from Miss West, you intend to take an active share in the movement—I presume you would like to be of as much service as possible, both to the cause in general and to this particular agitation.

ROS. Yes, that is my earnest wish.

MORT. Good. But now I must tell you, Pastor Rosmer, that if you openly declare your defection from the Church, you tie your own hands at the very outset.

ROS. Do you think so?

MORT. Yes; believe me, you won't be able to do much for the cause, in this part of the country at any rate. And besides—we have plenty of freethinkers already, Pastor Rosmer—I might almost say too many. What the party requires, is a Christian element—something that every one must respect. That is what we are sadly in need of. And, therefore, I advise you to keep your own counsel about what doesn't concern the public. That's my view of the matter, at least.

ROS. I understand. Then if I openly confess my apostasy, you dare not have anything to do with me?

MORT. [*shaking his head*]. I scarcely like to risk it, Pastor Rosmer. I have made it a rule for some time past not to support any one or anything that is actively opposed to the Church.

ROS. Then you have yourself re turned to the Church.

MORT. That concerns no one bu myself.

ROS. Ah, so that is it. Now I un derstand you.

MORT. Pastor Rosmer—you ough to remember that I—I in particular have not full liberty of action.

ROS. What hampers you?

MORT. The fact that I am a marke man.

ROS. Ah—indeed.

MORT. A marked man, Pastor Ros mer. You, above all men, should re member that; for I have chiefly you t thank for the scandal that brande me.

ROS. If I had then stood where stand now, I should have dealt mo gently with your offence.

MORT. That I don't doubt. But is too late now. You have brand me once for all—branded me for lif I suppose you can scarcely understan what that means. But now you ma perhaps come to feel the smart of yourself, Pastor Rosmer.

ROS. I?

MORT. Yes. You surely don't su pose that Rector Knoll and his s will ever forgive a desertion li yours? I hear the "County News" going to be very savage in futu You, too, may find yourself a mark man before long.

ROS. In personal matters, Mr. Mo ensgard, I feel myself secure from attack. My life is beyond reproach.

MORT. [*with a sly smile*]. That's large word, Mr. Rosmer.

ROS. Perhaps; but I have a rig to use it.

MORT. Even if you were to sc

se your conduct as closely as you e scrutinised mine?

Cos. Your tone is very curious. at are you hinting at? Anything nite?

Mort. Yes, something definite. Only thing. But that might be bad ugh, if malicious opponents got d of it.

Cos. Will you have the kindness to me hear what it is?

Mort. Cannot you guess for your- Pastor.

os. No, certainly not. I had not slightest idea.

Mort. Well, well, I suppose I must e out with it then.—I have in my session a strange letter, dated from mersholm.

os. Miss West's letter, do you n? Is it so strange?

Mort. No, there's nothing strange ut that. But I once received an- r letter from this house.

os. Also from Miss West?

ort. No, Mr. Rosmer.

os. Well then, from whom? From m?

ort. From the late Mrs. Rosmer.

os. From my wife! You received tter from my wife!

ort. I did.

os. When?

ort. Towards the close of Mrs. ner's life. Perhaps about a year a half ago. That is the letter ll strange.

os. I suppose you know that my 's mind was affected at that time.

ort. Yes; I know many people ght so. But I don't think there anything in the letter to show it. n I call it strange, I mean in her sense.

Ros. And what in the world did my poor wife take into her head to write to you about?

Mort. I have the letter at home. She begins to the effect that she is living in great anxiety and fear; there are so many malicious people about here, she says; and they think of nothing but causing you trouble and injury.

Ros. Me?

Mort. Yes, so she says. And then comes the strangest part of all. Shall I go on, Pastor Rosmer?

Ros. Assuredly! Tell me everything, without reserve.

Mort. The deceased lady begs and implores me to be magnanimous. She knows, she says, that it was her husband that had me dismissed from my post as teacher; and she conjured me by all that's sacred not to avenge myself.

Ros. How did she suppose you could avenge yourself?

Mort. The letter says that if I should hear rumours of sinful doings at Rosmersholm, I am not to believe them; they are only spread abroad by wicked people who wish to make you unhappy.

Ros. Is all that in the letter?

Mort. You may read it yourself, sir, when you please.

Ros. But I don't understand——! What did she imagine the rumours to be about?

Mort. First, that the Pastor had deserted the faith of his fathers. Your wife denied that absolutely—then. And next—h'm——

Ros. Next?

Mort. Well, next she writes—rather confusedly—that she knows nothing of any sinful intrigue at Rosmersholm;

that she has never worried in any way. And if any such rumours should get about, she implores me to say nothing of the matter in the "Beacon."

ROS. Is no name mentioned?

MORT. None.

ROS. Who brought you the letter?

MORT. I have promised not to say. It was handed to me one evening, at dusk.

ROS. If you had made inquiries at the time, you would have learnt that my poor, unhappy wife was not fully accountable for her actions.

MORT. I did make inquiries, Pastor Rosmer. But I must say that was not the impression I received.

ROS. Was it not?—But what is your precise reason for telling me now about this incomprehensible old letter?

MORT. To impress on you the necessity for extreme prudence, Pastor Rosmer.

ROS. In my life, do you mean?

MORT. Yes. You must remember that from today you have ceased to be a neutral.

ROS. Then you have quite made up your mind that I must have something to conceal?

MORT. I don't know why an emancipated man should refrain from living his life out as fully as possible. But, as I said before, be exceedingly cautious in future. If anything should get abroad that conflicts with current prejudices, you may be sure the whole liberal movement will have to suffer for it.—Good-bye, Pastor Rosmer.

ROS. Good-bye.

MORT. I shall go straight to the office and have the great news put into the "Beacon."

ROS. Yes; omit nothing.

MORT. I shall omit nothing that th public need know.

[*He bows and goes out.* ROSME *remains standing in the doorway whil he goes down the stairs. The outc door is heard to close.*]

ROS. [*in the doorway, calls softly*] Rebecca! Re—— H'm. [*Aloud.*] Madam Helseth,—is Miss West no there?

MADAM H. [*from the hall*]. N Pastor Rosmer, she's not here.

[*The curtain at the back is draw aside.* REBECCA *appears at the doo way.*]

REB. Rosmer!

ROS. [*turns*]. What! Were you i my room? My dear, what were yo doing there?

REB. [*goes up to him*]. I was liste ing.

ROS. Oh, Rebecca, how could you

REB. I could not help it. He sa it so hatefully—that about my mornin gown——

ROS. Then you were there whe Kroll——?

REB. Yes. I wanted to know wh was lurking in his mind.

ROS. I would have told you.

REB. You would scarcely have to me all. And certainly not in his ow words.

ROS. Did you hear everythin then?

REB. Nearly everything, I think. had to go downstairs for a mome when Mortensgard came.

ROS. And then you came ba again——?

REB. Don't be vexed with me d friend!

os. Do whatever you think right. are mistress of your own actions. ut what do you say to all this, ecca——? Oh, I seem never to e needed you so much before!

EB. But you and I have been pre- ed for what must happen some e.

os. No, no—not for this.

EB. Not for this?

os. I knew well enough that ier or later our beautiful, pure ndship might be misinterpreted and ed. Not by Kroll—I could never e believed such a thing of him—but all those other people with the se souls and the ignoble eyes. Oh, —I had reason enough for keeping alliance so jealously concealed. It a dangerous secret.

EB. Oh, why should we care what hose people think! We know in own hearts that we are blameless.

os. Blameless? I? Yes, I thought till to-day. But now—now, Rebec- —?

EB. Well, what now?

os. How am I to explain Beata's ble accusation?

EB. [*vehemently*]. Oh, don't speak Beata! Don't think of Beata any e! You were just beginning to e off the hold she has upon you, in the grave.

os. Since I have heard all this, seems, in a ghastly sort of way, e alive again.

EB. Oh, no—not that, Rosmer! Not

os. Yes, I tell you. We must try t to the bottom of this. What can bly have led her to misinterpret s so fatally?

EB. You are surely not beginning to doubt that she was on the very verge of insanity?

Ros. Oh! yes—that is just what I can't feel quite certain of any longer. And besides—even if she was——

Reb. If she was? Well, what then?

Ros. I mean—where are we to look for the determining cause that drove her morbid spirit over the borderland of madness?

Reb. Oh, why brood over problems no one can solve?

Ros. I cannot help it, Rebecca. I cannot shake off these gnawing doubts, however much I may wish to.

Reb. But it may become dangerous —this eternal dwelling upon one miserable subject.

Ros. [*walks about restlessly, in thought*]. I must have betrayed myself in one way or another. She must have noticed how happy I began to feel from the time you came to us.

Reb. Yes, but dear, even if she did——?

Ros. Be sure it didn't escape her that we read the same books—that the interest of discussing all the new ideas drew us together. Yet I cannot understand it! I was so careful to spare her. As I look back, it seems to me I made it the business of my life to keep her in ignorance of all our interests. Did I not, Rebecca?

Reb. Yes, yes; certainly you did.

Ros. And you too. And yet——! Oh, it's terrible to think of! She must have gone about here—full of her morbid passion—saying never a word—watching us—noting everything—and misinterpreting everything.

Reb. [*pressing her hands together*]. Oh, I should never have come to Rosmersholm!

ROS. To think of all she must have suffered in silence! All the foulness her sick brain must have conjured up around us! Did she never say anything to you to put you at all on the alert?

REB. [*as if startled*]. To me! Do you think I should have stayed a day longer if she had?

ROS. No, no, of course not.—Oh, what a battle she must have fought! And alone too, Rebecca; desperate and quite alone!—and then, at last, that heart-breaking, accusing victory—in the mill-race.

[*Throws himself into the chair by the writing-table, with his elbows on the table and his face in his hands.*]

REB. [*approaches him cautiously from behind*]. Listen, Rosmer. If it were in your power to call Beata back—to you—to Rosmersholm—would you do it?

ROS. Oh, how do I know what I would or would not do? I can think of nothing but this one thing—that cannot be recalled.

REB. You were just beginning to live, Rosmer. You had begun. You had freed yourself—on every side. You felt so buoyant and happy——

ROS. Oh, yes—I did indeed.—And now this crushing blow falls on me.

REB. [*behind him, rests her arms on the chair-back*]. How beautiful it was when we sat in the twilight, in the room downstairs, helping each other to lay out our new life-plans! You were to set resolutely to work in the world—the living world to today, as you said. You were to go as a messenger of emancipation from home to home; to win over minds and wills; to create noble-men around you in wider ar wider circles. Noble-men.

ROS. Happy noble-men.

REB. Yes—happy.

ROS. For it is happiness that e nobles, Rebecca.

REB. Should you not say—sorro as well? A great sorrow?

ROS. Yes—if one can get throug it—over it—away from it.

REB. That is what you must do.

ROS. [*shakes his head gloomily*]. shall never get over this—wholly. The will always be a doubt—a questio left. I can never again know th luxury of the soul which makes li so marvellously sweet to live!

REB. [*bends over his chair-back, a says more softly*]. What is it y mean, Rosmer?

ROS. [*looking up at her*]. Peacef happy innocence.

REB. [*recoils a step*]. Yes. Inn cence.

[*A short pause*

ROS. [*with his elbow on the tab leaning his head on his hand, and loo ing straight before him*]. And wh extraordinary penetration she showe How systematically she put all this t gether! First she begins to doubt r orthodoxy—— How could that occur her? But it did occur to her; and th it grew to be a certainty. And then yes, then of course it was easy for h to think all the rest possible. [*Sits in his chair and runs his hands throu his hair.*] Oh, all these horrible imagi ings! I shall never get rid of the I feel it. I know it. At any mome they will come rushing in upon m and bring back the thought of t dead!

EB. Like the White Horse of Rosholm.

OS. Yes, like that. Rushing forth he darkness—in the silence.

EB. And because of this miserable ient of the brain, you will let slip hold you were beginning to take n the living world?

OS. You may well think it hard. hard, Rebecca. But I have no ce. How could I ever leave this nd me?

EB. [*behind his chair*]. By enterinto new relations.

OS. [*surprised, looks up*]. New reons?

EB. Yes, new relations to the out- world. Live, work, act. Don't here brooding and groping among luble enigmas.

OS. [*rises*]. New relations? [*Walks ss the floor, stops at the door and comes back*]. One question occurs ie. Has it not occurred to you too, ecca?

EB. [*drawing breath with diffi-y*]. Let me—hear—what it is.

OS. What form do you think our ions will take after today?

EB. I believe our friendship will ire—come what may.

OS. That is not exactly what I nt. The thing that first brought together, and that unites us so ely—our common faith in a pure radeship between man and woman

EB. Yes, yes—what of that?

OS. I mean, that such a relation this of ours—does it not presupa quiet, happy, peaceful life—

EB. What then?

Ros. But the life I must now look forward to is one of struggle and unrest and strong agitations. For I will live my life, Rebecca! I will not be crushed to earth by horrible possibilities. I will not have my course of life forced upon me, either by the living or by—any one else.

Reb. No, no—do not! Be an absolutely free man, Rosmer!

Ros. But can you not guess what is in my mind? Do you not know? Don't you see how I can best shake off all gnawing memories—all the unhappy past?

Reb. How?

Ros. By opposing to it a new, a living reality.

Reb. [*feeling for the chair-back*]. A living—— What do you mean?

Ros. [*comes nearer*]. Rebecca—if I were to ask you—will you be my second wife?

Reb. [*for a moment speechless, then cries out with joy*]. Your wife! Your ——! I!

Ros. Come; let us try it. We two will be one. The place of the dead must stand empty no longer.

Reb. I—in Beata's place——!

Ros. Then she will be out of the saga—completely—for ever and ever.

Reb. [*softly, trembling*]. Do you believe that, Rosmer?

Ros. It must be so! It must! I cannot—I will not go through life with a dead body on my back. Help me to cast it off, Rebecca. And let us stifle memories in freedom, in joy, in passion. You shall be to me the only wife I have ever had.

Reb. [*with self-command*]. Never

speak of this again. I will never be your wife.

Ros. What! Never! Do you not think you could come to love me? Is there not already a strain of love in our friendship?

Reb. [*puts her hands over her ears as if in terror*]. Don't speak so, Rosmer! Don't say such things!

Ros. [*seizes her arm*]. Yes, yes—there is a growing promise in our relation. Oh, I can see that you feel it too. Do you not, Rebecca?

Reb. [*once more firm and calm*]. Listen to me. I tell you—if you persist in this, I will go away from Rosmersholm.

Ros. Go away! You! You cannot. It is impossible.

Reb. It is still more impossible that I should be your wife. Never in this world can I marry you.

Ros. [*looks at her in surprise*]. You say "can"; and you say it so strangely. Why can you not?

Reb. [*seizes both his hands*]. Dear friend—both for your own sake and for mine—do not ask why. [*Lets go his hands.*] Do not, Rosmer.

[*Goes towards the door on the left.*]

Ros. Henceforth I can think of nothing but that one question—why?

Reb. [*turns and looks at him*]. Then it is all over.

Ros. Between you and me?

Reb. Yes.

Ros. It will never be all over between us two. You will never leave Rosmersholm.

Reb. [*with her hand on the door-handle*]. No, perhaps I shall not. But if you ask me again—it is all over.

Ros. All over? How——?

Reb. For then I will go the way that Beata went. Now you know i Rosmer.

Ros. Rebecca——?

Reb. [*in the doorway, nods slowly* Now, you know it. [*She goes out.*

Ros. [*stares, thunderstruck, at th door, and says to himself*]. What—is this?

ACT III

Scene—*The sitting-room at Ros mersholm. The window and the en trance door are open. The sun is shin ing outside. Forenoon.*

Rebecca West, *dressed as in th first Act stands at the window, wate ing and arranging the flowers. He crochet-work lies in the arm-chai* Madam Helseth *is moving about, dus ing the furniture with a feather-brus*

Reb. [*after a short silence*]. I can understand the Pastor remaining s long upstairs today.

Madam H. Oh, he often does tha But he'll soon be down now, I shou think.

Reb. Have you seen anything him?

Madam H. I caught a glimpse him when I went upstairs with h coffee. He was in his bedroom, dres ing.

Reb. I asked because he was little out of sorts yesterday.

Madam H. He didn't look well. wonder if there isn't something ami between him and his brother-in-la

Reb. What do you think it can b

Madam H. I couldn't say. Perha it's that Mortensgard that has be setting them against each other.

Reb. Likely enough.—Do you kn anything of this Peter Mortensgar

Madam H. No indeed. How cou

think so, Miss? A fellow like him?

EB. Do you mean because he edits a low paper?

ADAM H. Oh, it's not only that.—must have heard, Miss, that he a child by a married woman that been deserted by her husband?

EB. Yes, I have heard of it. But ust have been long before I came e.

ADAM H. It's true he was very ng at the time; and she should e known better. He wanted to ry her too; but of course he could-do that. And I don't say he hasn't l dear for it.—But, good Lord, tensgard has got on in the world e those days. There's a many ple run after him now.

EB. Yes, most of the poor people g their affairs to him when they're ny trouble.

ADAM H. Ah, and others too, per-s, besides the poor folk——

EB. [*looks at her furtively*]. Indeed.

ADAM H. [*by the sofa, dusting y vigorously*]. Perhaps the last ple you would think likely to, s.

EB. [*busy with the flowers*]. Come, , that's only an idea of yours, dam Helseth. You can't be sure of t you're saying.

ADAM H. You think I can't, Miss? I can tell you I am. Why—if must know it—I once took a letter o Mortensgard myself.

EB. [*turning*]. No—did you?

ADAM H. Yes, indeed I did. And tter that was written here at Ros-sholm too.

EB. Really, Madam Helseth?

ADAM H. Yes, that it was. And it was on fine paper, and there was a fine red seal on it, too.

REB. And it was given to you to deliver? Then, my dear Madam Helseth, it's not difficult to guess who wrote it.

MADAM H. Well?

REB. It must have been something that poor Mrs. Rosmer, in her morbid state——

MADAM H. It's you that say that, Miss, not me.

REB. But what was in the letter? Oh, I forgot——you can't know that.

MADAM H. H'm; what if I did know it, all the same?

REB. Did she tell you what she was writing about?

MADAM H. No, she didn't exactly do that. But Mortensgard, when he'd read it, he began questioning me backwards and forwards and up and down, so that I soon guessed what was in it.

REB. Then what do you think it was? Oh! my dear good Madam Helseth, do tell me.

MADAM H. Oh! no, Miss. Not for the whole world.

REB. Oh! you can surely tell me. We two are such good friends.

MADAM H. Lord preserve me from telling you anything about that, Miss. I can only tell you that it was something horrible that they'd got the poor sick lady to believe.

REB. Who had got her to believe it?

MADAM H. Wicked people, Miss West. Wicked people.

REB. Wicked——?

MADAM H. Yes, I say it again. They must have been real wicked people.

REB. And who do you think it could have been?

MADAM H. Oh, I know well enough what to think. But Lord forbid *I* should say anything. To be sure there's a certain lady in the town—h'm!

REB. I can see that you mean Mrs. Kroll.

MADAM H. Ah, she's a fine one, she is. She has always been the great lady with me. And she's never had any too much love for you neither.

REB. Do you think Mrs. Rosmer was in her right mind when she wrote that letter to Mortensgard?

MADAM H. It's a queer thing a person's mind, Miss. Clean out of her mind I don't think she was.

REB. But she seemed to go distracted when she learned that she must always be childless. It was that that unsettled her reason.

MADAM H. Yes, poor lady, that was a dreadful blow to her.

REB. [*takes up her crochet and sits in a chair by the window*]. But after all—don't you think it was a good thing for the Pastor, Madam Helseth?

MADAM H. What, Miss?

REB. That there were no children. Don't you think so?

MADAM H. H'm, I'm sure I don't know what to say about that.

REB. Oh, yes, believe me, it was fortunate for him. Pastor Rosmer is not the man to have crying children about his house.

MADAM H. Ah, Miss, little children don't cry at Rosmersholm.

REB. [*looks at her*]. Don't cry?

MADAM H. No. As long as people can remember, children have never been know to cry in this house.

REB. That's very strange.

MADAM H. Yes; isn't it? But runs in the family. And then there another strange thing. When the grow up, they never laugh. Neve as long as they live.

REB. How very extraordinary—

MADAM H. Have you ever on heard or seen the Pastor laugh, Miss

REB. No—now that I think of it, almost believe you are right. But don't think any one laughs much this part of the country.

MADAM H. No, they don't. The say it began at Rosmersholm. An then I suppose it spread about, as it was catching like.

REB. You are a very wise woma Madam Helseth.

MADAM H. Oh, Miss, you must sit there and make fun of me. [*L tens.*] Hush, hush—here's the Past coming down. He doesn't like to s dusting going on.

[*She goes out to the righ*

JOHANNES ROSMER, *with his hat a stick in his hand, enters from t hall.*

ROS. Good morning, Rebecca.

REB. Good morning, dear. [*A m ment after—crocheting.*] Are you g ing out?

ROS. Yes.

REB. It's a beautiful day.

ROS. You didn't look in on me t morning.

REB. No, I didn't. Not today.

ROS. Do you not intend to in ture?

REB. Oh, I don't know yet, dear.

ROS. Has anything come for me?

REB. The "County News" has co

ROS. The "County News"?

REB. There it is on the table.

s. [*puts down his hat and stick*].
re anything——?

B. Yes.

S. And you didn't send it up?

B. You will read it soon enough.

S. Oh, indeed? [*Takes the paper reads, standing by the table.*]—t!—"We cannot warn our readers earnestly against unprincipled ades." [*Looks at her.*] They call renegade, Rebecca.

B. They mention no names.

S. That makes no difference. *ds on.*] "Secret traitors to the cause."— "Judas-natures, who brazen confessions of their apos- as soon as they think the most nient and—profitable moment has ed." "Ruthless befouling of a honoured through generations" the confident hope of a suitable d from the party in momentary r." [*Lays down the paper on the*] And they can say such things e!—Men who have known me so and so well! Things they them- don't believe. Things they know is not a word of truth in—they them all the same.

B. That is not all.

S. [*takes up the paper again*]. perience and lack of judgment nly cause"—"pernicious influence ssibly extending to matters which, he present, we do not wish to subjects of public discussion or ation." [*Looks at her.*] What is

B. It is aimed at me, plainly h.

S. [*lays down the paper*]. Re-,—this is the conduct of dishon-le men.

REB. Yes, they need scarcely be so contemptuous of Mortensgard.

ROS. [*walks about the room*]. Something must be done. All that is good in human nature will go to ruin, if this is allowed to go on. But it shall not go on! Oh, what a joy—what a joy it would be to me to let a little light into all this gloom and ugliness!

REB. [*rises*]. Ah! yes, Rosmer. In that you have a great and glorious object to live for.

ROS. Only think, if I could rouse them to see themselves as they are; teach them to repent and blush before their better natures; bring them together in mutual forbearance—in love, Rebecca!

REB. Yes, put your whole strength into that, and you must succeed.

ROS. I think success must be possible. Oh, what a delight it would be then to live one's life! No more malignant wrangling; only emulation. All eyes fixed on the same goal. Every mind, every will pressing forward—upward—each by the path its nature prescribes for it. Happiness for all—through all. [*Happens to look out of the window, starts and says sadly.*] Ah! Not through me.

REB. Not——? Not through you?

ROS. Not for me.

REB. Oh! Rosmer, do not let such doubts take hold of you.

ROS. Happiness—dear Rebecca—happiness is above all things the calm, glad certainty of innocence.

REB. [*looks straight before her.*] Yes, innocence——

ROS. Oh, you cannot know what guilt means. But I——

REB. You least of all!

ROS. [*points out of the window*]. The mill-race.

REB. Oh! Rosmer——!

[MADAM HELSETH *looks in at the door.*]

MADAM H. Miss West!

REB. Presently, presently. Not now.

MADAM H. Only a word, Miss.

[REBECCA *goes to the door.* MADAM HELSETH *tells her something. They whisper together for a few moments.* MADAM HELSETH *nods and goes out.*]

ROS. [*uneasily*]. Was it anything for me?

REB. No, only something about the house-work.—You ought to go out into the fresh air, dear Rosmer. You should take a good long walk.

ROS. [*takes up his hat*]. Yes, come. Let us go together.

REB. No, dear, I can't just now. You must go alone. But shake off all these gloomy thoughts. Promise me.

ROS. I am afraid I shall never shake them off.

REB. Oh, that such baseless fancies should take so strong a hold of you—!

ROS. Not so baseless I am afraid, Rebecca. I lay awake all night thinking it over and over. Perhaps Beata saw clearly after all.

REB. In what?

ROS. In her belief that I loved you, Rebecca.

REB. Right in that!

ROS. [*lays his hat down on the table*]. The question that haunts me is this: were we two not deceiving ourselves all the time—when we called our relation friendship?

REB. You mean that it might as well have been called——?

ROS. ——love. Yes, Rebecca, that is what I mean. Even while Beata was alive, all my thoughts were for yo It was you I longed for. It was wh you were by my side that I felt t calm gladness of utter content. If y think it over, Rebecca—did we not f for each other from the first a s of sweet, secret child-love—desirele dreamless? Was it not so with yo Tell me.

REB. [*struggling with herself.*] O —I don't know what to answer.

ROS. And it was this close-link life in and for each other that took for friendship. No, Rebecca—o bond has been a spiritual marriage perhaps from the very first. That why there is guilt on my soul. I h no right to such happiness—it was sin against Beata.

REB. No right to live happily? you believe that, Rosmer.

ROS. She looked at our relation w the eyes of her love—judged it af the fashion of her love. Inevitab Beata could not have judged otherw than she did.

REB. But how can you accuse yo self because of Beata's delusion?

ROS. It was love for me—her k of love—that drove her into the m race. That is an immovable fact, becca. And that is what I can ne get over.

REB. Oh, think of nothing but great, beautiful task you have devo your life to.

ROS. [*shakes his head*]. It can n be accomplished dear. Not by me. after what I have come to know.

REB. Why not by you?

ROS. Because no cause ever umphs that has its origin in sin.

REB. [*vehemently*]. Oh, these only ancestral doubts—ancestral f

estral scruples. They say the come back to Rosmersholm in the of rushing white horses. I think hows that it is true.

s. Be that as it may; what does ter so long as I cannot rid myself e feeling? And believe me, Re-, it is as I tell you. The cause is to win a lasting victory must for its champion a happy, inno-nan.

s. Is happiness so indispensable u, Rosmer?

s. Happiness? Yes, dear,—it

s. To you who can never laugh?

s. Yes, in spite of that. Believe have a great capacity for happi-

s. Now go for your walk, dear. od long walk. Do you hear?—ere is your hat. And your stick,

s. [*takes both*]. Thanks. And von't come with me?

. No, no; I can't just now.

. Very well, then. You are with ne the less.

goes out by the entrance door.

CA *waits a moment, cautiously ng his departure from behind pen door; then she goes to the n the right.*]

[*opens the door, and says in tone*]. Now, Madam Helseth. an show him in now.

[*Goes towards the window.*]

noment later RECTOR KROLL *en-om the right. He bows silently rmally, and keeps his hat in his*

LL. He has gone out?

Yes.

KROLL. Does he usually stay out long?

REB. Yes, he does. But one cannot count on him to-day. So if you don't care to meet him——

KROLL. No, no. It is you I want to speak to,—quite alone.

REB. Then we had better not lose time. Sit down, Rector.

[*She sits in the easy-chair by the window.* RECTOR KROLL *sits on a chair beside her.*]

KROLL. Miss West—you can scarcely imagine how deeply and painfully I have taken this to heart—this change in Johannes Rosmer.

REB. We expected it would be so —at first.

KROLL. Only at first?

REB. Rosmer was confident that sooner or later you would join him.

KROLL. I?

REB. You and all his other friends.

KROLL. Ah, there you see! That shows the infirmity of his judgment in all that concerns men and practical life.

REB. But after all—since he feels it a necessity to emancipate himself on all sides—

KROLL. Yes, but wait—that is just what I do not believe.

REB. What do you believe then?

KROLL. I believe that you are at the bottom of it all.

REB. It is your wife who has put that in your head, Rector Kroll.

KROLL. No matter who has put it in my head. What is certain is that I feel a strong suspicion — an exceedingly strong suspicion—when I think things over, and piece together all I know of your behaviour ever since you came here.

REB. [*looks at him*]. I seem to recollect a time when you felt an exceedingly strong faith in me, dear Rector. I might almost call it a warm faith.

KROLL [*in a subdued voice*]. Whom could you not bewitch—if you tried?

REB. Did I try——

KROLL. Yes, you did. I am no longer such a fool as to believe that there was any feeling in the matter. You simply wanted to get a footing at Rosmersholm—to strike root here—and in that I was to serve you. Now I see it.

REB. You seem utterly to have forgotten that it was Beata who begged and implored me to come out here?

KROLL. Yes, when you had bewitched her to. Can the feeling she came to entertain for you be called friendship? It was adoration—almost idolatry. It developed into — what shall I call it?—a sort of desperate passion.—Yes, that is the right word for it.

REB. Be so good as to recollect the state your sister was in. So far as I am concerned, I don't think any one can accuse me of being hysterical.

KROLL. No; that you certainly are not. But that makes you all the more dangerous to the people you want to get into your power. It is easy for you to weigh your acts and calculate consequences—just because your heart is cold.

REB. Cold? Are you so sure of that?

KROLL. I am quite certain of it now. Otherwise you could never have lived here year after year without faltering in the pursuit of your object. Well, well—you have gained your end. You have got him and everything into your power. But in order to do so, have not scrupled to make him happy.

REB. That is not true. It is I—it is you yourself that have m him unhappy.

KROLL. I?

REB. Yes, when you led him to agine that he was responsible Beata's terrible end.

KROLL. Does he feel that so de then?

REB. How can you doubt it? mind so sensitive as his——

KROLL. I thought that an em pated man, so-called, was abov such scruples.—But there we hav Oh! yes—I admit I knew how it w be. The descendant of the men look down on us from these wa how could he hope to cut himself a from all that has been handed without a break from generatio generation?

REB. [*looks down thoughtfu* Johannes Rosmer's spirit is d rooted in his ancestry. That is certain.

KROLL. Yes, and you should taken that fact into considerati you had felt any affection for But that sort of consideration wa doubt beyond you. There is suc immeasurable difference between antecedents and his.

REB. What antecedents do mean?

KROLL. I am speaking of you gin—your family antecedents, West.

REB. Oh, indeed! Yes, it is true that I come of very humble Nevertheless——

KROLL. I am not thinking of

position. I allude to your moral
edents.

B. Moral——? In what sense?

OLL. The circumstances of your

B. What do you mean?

OLL. I only mention the matter
se it accounts for your whole
ict.

B. I do not understand this.
must explain.

OLL. I really did not suppose you
require an explanation. Other-
it would have been very odd that
hould have let Dr. West adopt
—

B. [*rises*]. Ah! Now I under-

OLL. ——and that you should
taken his name. Your mother's
was Gamvik.

. [*walks across the room*]. My
's name was Gamvik, Rector

OLL. Your mother's business must
brought her very frequently into
t with the parish doctor.

. Yes, it did.

LL. And then he takes you into
use—as soon as your mother dies.
eats you harshly; and yet you
with him. You know that he
leave you a half-penny—as a
of fact, you only got a case
books—and yet you stay on;
ar with him; you nurse him to
t.

[*stands by the table, looking*
illy at him]. And you account
this by assuming that there
omething immoral — something
al about my birth?

LL. I attribute your care for
involuntary filial instinct. In-
deed I believe your whole conduct is
determined by your origin.

REB. [*vehemently*]. But there is not a single word of truth in what you say! And I can prove it! Dr. West did not come to Finmark till after I was born.

KROLL. Excuse me, Miss West. He settled there the year before. I have assured myself of that.

REB. You are mistaken, I say! You are utterly mistaken.

KROLL. You told me the day before yesterday that you were nine-and-twenty—in your thirtieth year.

REB. Indeed! Did I say so?

KROLL. Yes, you did. And I can calculate from that——

REB. Stop! You needn't calculate. I may as well tell you at once: I am a year older than I give myself out to be.

KROLL [*smiles incredulously*]. Really! I am surprised! What can be the reason of that?

REB. When I had passed twenty-five, it seemed to me I was getting altogether too old for an unmarried woman. And so I began to lie about my age.

KROLL. You? An emancipated woman! Have you prejudices about the age for marriage?

REB. Yes, it was idiotic of me—idiotic and absurd. But some folly or other will always cling to us, not to be shaken off. We are made so.

KROLL. Well, so be it; but my calculation may be right, none the less. For Dr. West was up there on a short visit the year before he got the appointment.

REB. [*with a vehement outburst*]. It is not true!

KROLL. Is it not true?

REB. No. My mother never spoke of any such visit.

KROLL. Did she not?

REB. No, never. Nor Dr. West either; not a word about it.

KROLL. Might not that be because they both had reasons for suppressing a year? Just as you have done, Miss West. Perhaps it is a family foible.

REB. [*walks about clenching and wringing her hands*]. It is impossible. You want to cheat me into believing it. This can never, never be true. It cannot! Never in this world——

KROLL [*rises*]. My dear Miss West —why in heaven's name are you so terribly excited? You quite frighten me! What am I to think — to believe——?

REB. Nothing! You are to think and believe nothing.

KROLL. Then you must really tell me how you can take this affair—this possibility—so terribly to heart.

REB. [*controlling herself*]. It is perfectly simple, Rector Kroll. I have no wish to be taken for an illegitimate child.

KROLL. Indeed! Well, well, let us be satisfied with that explanation—in the meantime. But in that case you must still have a certain—prejudice on that point too?

REB. Yes, I suppose I have.

KROLL. Ah, I fancy it is much the same with most of what you call your "emancipation." You have read yourself into a number of new ideas and opinions. You have got a sort of smattering of recent discoveries in various fields—discoveries that seem to overthrow certain principles which have hitherto been held impregnable and unassailable. But all this has only been a matter of the intellect, West—a superficial acquisition. It not passed into your blood.

REB. [*thoughtfully*]. Perhaps are right.

KROLL. Yes, look into your mind, and you will see! And if is the case with you, one may e guess how it must be with Joha Rosmer. It is sheer, unmitigated ness—it is running blindfold to struction—for him to think of co openly forward and confessing hi an apostate! Only think—a ma his sensitive nature! Imagine him owned and persecuted by the circ which he has always formed a pa exposed to ruthless attacks from the best people in the community! is not—he never can be the ma endure all that.

REB. He must endure it! It i late now for him to retreat.

KROLL. Not at all too late. B means. What has happened ca hushed up—or at least explained as a mere temporary aberration, ever deplorable. But—one measu certainly indispensable.

REB. And what is that?

KROLL. You must get him to leg the position, Miss West.

REB. His position towards me?

KROLL. Yes. You must make do that.

REB. Then you absolutely ca clear your mind to the idea tha position requires to be—legalise you call it?

KROLL. I would rather not go the matter too closely. But I b I have noticed that it is nowhere to break through all so-called preju than in—h'm——

s. In the relation between man
voman, you mean?

OLL. Yes,—to speak plainly—I
so.

s. [*wanders across the room and
out at the window*]. I could al-
say I wish you were right, Rector

OLL. What do you mean by that?
ay it so strangely.

s. Oh! well — please let us drop
bject. Ah,—there he comes.

OLL. Already! Then I will go.

s. [*goes towards him*]. No.—
stay. There is something I want
hear.

OLL. Not now. I don't feel as if
d bear to see him.

s. I beg you to stay. Do! If
ou will regret it by-and-by. It is
ast time I shall ask you for
ing.

OLL [*looks at her in surprise and
down his hat*]. Very well, Miss
—so be it, then.

short silence. Then JOHANNES
ER *enters from the hall.*

. [*sees the* RECTOR, *and stops in
orway*]. What!—Are you here?
. He did not wish to meet you,

OLL [*involuntarily*]. "Dear!"
. Yes, Rector Kroll, Rosmer and
"dear" to each other. That is
sult of our "position."

OLL. Was that what you wanted
hear?

. That—and a little more.

. [*comes forward*]. What is the
of this visit?

OLL. I wanted to try once more
you and win you back to us.

. [*points to the newspaper*].
what appears in that paper?

KROLL. I did not write it.

ROS. Did you make the slightest effort to prevent its appearance?

KROLL. That would have been to betray the cause I serve. And, besides, it was not in my power.

REB. [*tears the paper into shreds, crushes up the pieces and throws them behind the stove*]. There! Now it is out of sight. And let it be out of mind too. For there will be nothing more of that sort, Rosmer.

KROLL. Ah, if you could only make sure of that!

REB. Come, let us sit down, dear. All three of us. And then I will tell you everything.

ROS. [*seats himself mechanically*]. What has come over you, Rebecca? This unnatural calmness—what is it?

REB. The calmness of resolution. [*Seats herself*]. Pray sit down too, Rector.

[RECTOR KROLL *seats himself on the sofa.*]

ROS. Resolution, you say? What resolution?

REB. I am going to give you back what you require in order to live your life. Dear friend, you shall have your happy innocence back again!

ROS. What can you mean?

REB. I have only to tell you something. That will be enough.

ROS. Well!

REB. When I came down here from Finmark — along with Dr. West — it seemed to me that a great, wide new world was opening up before me. The Doctor had taught me all sorts of things—all the fragmentary knowledge of life that I possessed in those days. [*With a struggle and in a scarcely audible voice.*] And then ——

KROLL. And then?

ROS. But Rebecca—I know all this.

REB. [*mastering herself*]. Yes, yes—you are right. You know enough about this.

KROLL [*looks hard at her*]. Perhaps I had better go.

REB. No, please stay where you are, my dear Rector. [*To* ROSMER.] Well, you see, this was how it was—I wanted to take my share in the life of the new era that was dawning, with all its new ideas.—Rector Kroll told me one day that Ulric Brendel had had great influence over you while you were still a boy. I thought it must surely be possible for me to carry on his work.

ROS. You came here with a secret design——?

REB. We two, I thought, should march onward in freedom, side by side. Ever onward. Ever farther and farther to the front. But between you and perfect emancipation there rose that dismal, insurmountable barrier.

ROS. What barrier do you mean?

REB. I mean this, Rosmer: You could grow into freedom only in the clear, fresh sunshine — and here you were pining, sickening in the gloom of such a marriage.

ROS. You have never before spoken to me of my marriage in that tone.

REB. No, I did not dare to, for I should have frightened you.

KROLL [*nods to* ROSMER]. Do you hear that?

REB. [*goes on*]. But I saw quite well where your deliverance lay—your only deliverance. And then I went to work.

ROS. Went to work? In what way?

KROLL. Do you mean that——?

REB. Yes, Rosmer——[*Rises.*] Sit still. You too, Rector Kroll. But it must out. It was not you, Ros You are innocent. It was I that l —that ended in luring Beata out the paths of delusion——

ROS. [*springs up*]. Rebecca!

KROLL [*rises from the sofa*]. paths of delusion!

REB. The paths—that led to millrace. Now you know it bot you.

ROS. [*as if stunned*]. But I understand——What is it she is ing? I don't understand a word—

KROLL. Oh! yes, Rosmer, I am ginning to understand.

ROS. But what did you do? can you possibly have told her? was nothing—absolutely nothing tell!

REB. She came to know that were working yourself free from a old prejudices.

ROS. Yes, but that was not the at that time.

REB. I knew that it soon woul

KROLL [*nods to* ROSMER]. Aha

ROS. And then? What more must know all now.

REB. Some time after — I be and implored her to let me go from Rosmersholm.

ROS. Why did you want to then?

REB. I did not want to go; I w to stay here, where I was. But I her that it would be best for us that I should go away in time. I her to understand that if I stayed any longer, I could not—I coul tell—what might happen.

ROS. Then this is what you sai did?

REB. Yes, Rosmer.

os. This is what you call "going ork."

EB. [*in a broken voice*]. I called it es.

os. [*after a pause*]. Have you con- d all now, Rebecca?

EB. Yes.

ROLL. Not all.

EB. [*looks at him in fear*]. What should there be?

ROLL. Did you not at last give a to understand that it was neces- —not only that it would be wisest, that it was necessary—both for own sake and Rosmer's that you ld go away somewhere—as soon as ble? Well?

EB. [*low and indistinctly*]. Per- I did say something of the sort.

os. [*sinks into the arm-chair by the ow*]. And this tissue of lies and t she—my unhappy, sick wife be- i in! Believed in it so firmly! mmovably! [*Looks up at* RE- A.] And she never turned to me. r said one word to me! Oh, Re- ,—I can see it in your face—you aded her from it!

EB. She had conceived a fixed idea she, as a childless wife, had no to be here. And then she im- d that it was her duty to you to e herself.

os. And you —you did nothing to use her of the idea?

EB. No.

ROLL. Perhaps you confirmed her ? Answer me! Did you not?

EB. I believe she may have under- me so.

os. Yes, yes—and in everything owed before your will. And she ffface herself! [*Springs up*]. How could you—how could you—how could you play this ghastly game!

REB. It seemed to me I had to choose between your life and hers, Rosmer.

KROLL [*severely and impressively*]. That choice was not for you to make.

REB. [*vehemently*]. You think then that I was cool and calculating and self-possessed all the time! I was not the same woman then that I am now, as I stand here telling it all. Besides, there are two sorts of will in us I believe! I wanted Beata away, by one means or another; but I never really believed that it would come to pass. As I felt my way forward, at each step I ventured, I seemed to hear something within me cry out: No farther! Not a step farther! And yet I could not stop. I had to venture the least little bit farther. Only one hair's-breadth more. And then one more—and always one more. — And then it happened.—That is the way such things come about.

[*A short silence.*]

ROS. [*to* REBECCA]. What do you think lies before you now? After this?

REB. Things must go with me as they will. It doesn't greatly matter.

KROLL. Not a word of remorse! Is it possible you feel none?

REB. [*coldly putting aside his question*]. Excuse me, Rector Kroll—that is a matter which concerns no one but me. I must settle it with myself.

KROLL [*to* ROSMER]. And this is the woman you are living under the same roof with — in the closest intimacy! [*Looks round at the pictures*]. Oh! if those that are gone could see us now!

ROS. Are you going back to town?

KROLL [*takes up his hat*]. Yes. The sooner the better.

ROS. [*does the same*]. Then I will go with you.

KROLL. Will you? Ah! yes, I was sure we had not lost you for good.

ROS. Come then, Kroll! Come!

[*Both go out through the hall without looking at* REBECCA.]

[*After a moment* REBECCA *goes cautiously to the window and looks out through the flowers.*]

REB. [*speaks to herself under her breath*]. Not over the foot-bridge today either. He goes round. Never across the mill-race. Never. [*Leaves window.*] Well, well, well!

[*Goes and pulls the bell-rope; a moment after,* MADAM HELSETH *enters from the right.*]

MADAM H. What is it, Miss?

REB. Madam Helseth, would you be so good as to have my trunk brought down from the garret?

MADAM H. Your trunk?

REB. Yes—the brown sealskin trunk, you know.

MADAM H. Yes, yes. But, Lord preserve us—are you going on a journey, Miss?

REB. Yes—now I am going on a journey, Madam Helseth.

MADAM H. And immediately!

REB. As soon as I have packed up.

MADAM H. Well, I've never heard the like of that! But you'll come back again soon, Miss, of course?

REB. I shall never come back again.

MADAM H. Never! Dear Lord, what will things be like at Rosmersholm when you're gone, Miss? And the poor Pastor was just beginning to be so happy and comfortable.

REB. Yes, but I have taken frig today, Madam Helseth.

MADAM H. Taken fright! De dear! how was that?

REB. I thought I saw something l a glimpse of white horses.

MADAM H. White horses! In bro daylight!

REB. Oh, they are abroad early a late—the white horses of Rosmersho [*With a change of tone.*] Well,—abo the trunk, Madam Helseth.

MADAM H. Yes, yes. The trunk.

[*Both go out to the righ*

ACT IV

SCENE—*The sitting-room at R mersholm. Late evening. A ligh lamp, with a shade over it, on table.*

REBECCA WEST *stands by the tab packing some small articles in a ha bag. Her cloak, hat, and the wh crocheted shawl are hanging over back of the sofa.*

MADAM HELSETH *enters from right.*

MADAM H. [*speaks in a low voice appears ill at ease*]. All your thi have been taken down, Miss. They in the kitchen passage.

REB. Very well. You have orde the carriage?

MADAM H. Yes. The coachm wants to know what time he ought be here.

REB. About eleven o'clock, I thi The steamer starts at midnight.

MADAM H. [*hesitates a little*]. the Pastor? If he shouldn't be h by that time?

REB. I shall go all the same. I don't see him, you can tell him tha will write to him—a long letter. him that.

ADAM H. Yes, writing—that may ll very well. But, poor Miss West do think you should try to speak to once more.

EB. Perhaps so. And yet — per- not.

ADAM H. Well—that I should live e this! I never thought of such a g.

EB. What did you think then, am Helseth?

ADAM H. Well, I certainly thought or Rosmer was a more dependable than this.

EB. Dependable?

ADAM H. Yes, that's what *I* say.

EB. Why, my dear Madam Hel- what do you mean?

ADAM H. I mean what's right and Miss. He shouldn't get out of it is way, that he shouldn't.

EB. [*looks at her*]. Come now, am Helseth, tell me plainly: what ou think is the reason I am going ?

ADAM H. Well, Heaven forgive us, ppose it can't be helped, Miss. Ah, well, well! But I certainly don't the Pastor's behaving handsome- Mortensgard had some excuse; er husband was alive, so that they couldn't marry, however much they ed to. But as for the Pastor—

B. [*with a faint smile*]. Could have believed such a thing of or Rosmer and me?

ADAM H. No, never in this world. ast, I mean—not until today.

B. But today, then——?

ADAM H. Well,—after all the hor- things that they tell me the papers aying about the Pastor——

B. Aha!

MADAM H. For the man that can go over to Mortensgard's religion — good Lord, I can believe anything of him.

REB. Oh! yes, I suppose so. But what about me? What have you to say about me?

MADAM H. Lord preserve us, Miss— I don't see that there's much to be said against you. It's not so easy for a lone woman to be always on her guard, that's certain.—We're all of us human, Miss West.

REB. That's very true, Madam Helseth. We are all of us human.—What are you listening to?

MADAM H. [*in a low voice*]. Oh! Lord,—if I don't believe that's him coming.

REB. [*starts*]. After all then——? [*Resolutely.*] Well well; so be it.

[JOHANNES ROSMER *enters from the hall.*]

ROS. [*sees the hand-bag, etc., turns to* REBECCA, *and asks*]. What does this mean?

REB. I am going.

ROS. At once?

REB. Yes. [*To* MADAM HELSETH.] Eleven o'clock then.

MADAM H. Very well, Miss.

[*Goes out to the right.*]

ROS. [*after a short pause*]. Where are you going to, Rebecca?

REB. North, by the steamer.

ROS. North? What takes you to the North?

REB. It was there I came from.

ROS. But you have no ties there now.

REB. I have none here either.

ROS. What do you think of doing?

REB. I don't know. I only want to have done with it all.

ROS. To have done with it?

REB. Rosmersholm has broken me.

ROS. [*his attention aroused*]. Do you say that?

REB. Broken me utterly and hopelessly.—I had a free and fearless will when I came here. Now I have bent my neck under a strange law.—From this day forth, I feel as if I had no courage for anything in the world.

ROS. Why not? What is the law that you say you have——?

REB. Dear, don't let us talk of that just now.—What happened between you and the Rector?

ROS. We have made peace.

REB. Ah! yes; so that was the end.

ROS. He gathered all our old friends together at his house. They have made it clear to me that the work of ennobling the minds of men—is not for me.—And besides, it is hopeless in itself, Rebecca.—I shall let it alone.

REB. Yes, yes—perhaps it is best so.

ROS. Is that what you say now? Do you think so now?

REB. I have come to think so—in the last few days.

ROS. You are lying, Rebecca.

REB. Lying——!

ROS. Yes, you are lying. You have never believed in me. You have never believed that I was man enough to carry the cause through to victory.

REB. I believed that we two together could do it.

ROS. That is not true. You thought that you yourself could do something great in life; and that you could use me to further your ends. I was to be a serviceable instrument to you—that is what you thought.

REB. Listen to me, Rosmer—

ROS. [*seats himself listlessly on the sofa*]. Oh, what is the use? I through it all now—I have been lik glove in your hands.

REB. Listen, Rosmer. Hear wha have to say. It will be for the time. [*Sits in a chair close to sofa.*] I intended to write you about it—when I was back in North. But I daresay it is best t you should hear it at once.

ROS. Have you more confessions make?

REB. The greatest of all, is to co

ROS. The greatest?

REB. What you have never pected. What gives light and sh to all the rest.

ROS. [*shakes his head*]. I don't derstand you at all.

REB. It is perfectly true that I o schemed to gain a footing at Rosm sholm. I thought I could not fail turn things to good account here. one way or the other—you understa

ROS. Well, you accomplished y ends.

REB. I believe I could have acc plished anything, anything in the w —at that time. For I had still my f less free-born will. I knew no scru —I stood in awe of no human ti But then began what has broken will—and cowed me so pitiably for my days.

ROS. What began? Do not sp in riddles.

REB. It came over me,—this w uncontrollable passion——. Oh, mer——!

ROS. Passion? You——! For wh

REB. For you.

ROS. [*tries to spring up*]. Wha this?

EB. [*stops him*]. Sit still, dear; e is more to tell.

OS. And you mean to say—that have loved me—in that way!

EB. I thought that it should be d love—then. Yes, I thought it was But it was not. It was what I It was a wild, uncontrollable ion.

OS. [*with difficulty*]. Rebecca, is it y you—you yourself—that you are king of?

EB. Yes, would you believe it, ner?

OS. Then it was because of this—r the influence of this—that you—you "went to work," as you call it?

EB. It came upon me like a storm he sea. It was like one of the ns we sometimes have in the North e winter time. It seizes you—and ls you along with it—wherever it There is no resisting it.

OS. And so it swept the unhappy a into mill-race.

EB. Yes; for it was a life-and-n struggle between Beata and me at time.

OS. Assuredly you were the gest at Rosmersholm. Stronger Beata and I together.

EB. I judged you rightly in so far I was sure I could never reach you you were a free man, both in cir-tances—and in spirit.

OS. But I don't understand you, cca. You—yourself — your whole uct is an insoluble riddle to me. I free now—both in spirit and in mstances. You have reached the goal you aimed at from the first. yet——

EB. I have never stood farther my goal than now.

ROS. And yet I say—when I asked you yesterday—begged you to be my wife—you cried out, as if in fear, that it could never be.

REB. I cried out in despair, Rosmer.

ROS. Why?

REB. Because Rosmersholm has sapped my strength. My old fearless will has had its wings clipped here. It is crippled! The time is past when I had courage for anything in the world. I have lost the power of action, Rosmer.

ROS. Tell me how this has come about.

REB. It has come about through my life with you.

ROS. But how? How?

REB. When I was left alone with you here,—and when you had become yourself again—

ROS. Yes, yes?

REB. ——for you were never quite yourself so long as Beata lived——

ROS. I am afraid you are right there.

REB. But when I found myself sharing your life here,—in quiet—in solitude,—when you showed me all your thoughts without reserve—every tender and delicate feeling, just as it came to you—then the great change came over me. Little by little, you understand. Almost imperceptibly—but at last with such overwhelming force that it reached to the depths of my soul.

ROS. Oh, is this true, Rebecca?

REB. All the rest — the horrible sense-intoxicated desire — passed far, far away from me. All the whirling passions settled down into quiet and silence. Rest descended on my soul—a stillness as on one of our northern bird-cliffs under the midnight sun.

ROS. Tell me more of this. Tell me all you can.

REB. There is not much more, dear. Only this—it was love that was born in me. The great self-denying love, that is content with life, as we two have lived it together.

ROS. Oh, if I had only had the faintest suspicion of all this!

REB. It is best as it is. Yesterday—when you asked me if I would be your wife—I cried out with joy—

ROS. Yes, did you not, Rebecca! I thought that was the meaning of your cry.

REB. For a moment, yes. I had forgotten myself. It was my old buoyant will that was struggling to be free. But it has no energy left now—no power of endurance.

ROS. How do you account for what has happened to you?

REB. It is the Rosmer view of life—or your view of life, at any rate—that has infected my will.

ROS. Infected?

REB. And made it sick. Enslaved it to laws that had no power over me before. You—life with you—has ennobled my mind——

ROS. Oh! that I could believe it!

REB. You may safely believe it! The Rosmer view of life ennobles. But ——[*shaking her head.*] But—but——

ROS. But——? Well?

REB. ——but it kills happiness.

ROS. Do you think so, Rebecca?

REB. My happiness, at any rate.

ROS. Yes, but are you so certain of that? If I were to ask you again now——? If I were to beg and entreat you——?

REB. Dear,—never speak of this again! It is impossible——! For you must know, Rosmer, I have a—a pa behind me.

ROS. More than what you have to me?

REB. Yes. Something different a something more.

ROS. [*with a faint smile*]. Is it r strange, Rebecca? Some such idea h crossed my mind now and then.

REB. It has? And yet——? Ev so——?

ROS. I never believed it. I or played with it—in my thoughts, y understand.

REB. If you wish it, I will tell y all, at once.

ROS. [*turning it off*]. No, no! will not hear a word. Whatever may be—I can forget it.

REB. But I cannot.

ROS. Oh! Rebecca——!

REB. Yes, Rosmer—this is the ter ble part of it: that now, when all lif happiness is within my grasp—i heart is changed, and my own p cuts me off from it.

ROS. Your past is dead, Rebecca. has no hold on you any more—it is part of you—as you are now.

REB. Oh, you know that these only phrases, dear. And innocen Where am I to get that from?

ROS. [*sadly*]. Ah,—innocence.

REB. Yes, innocence. That is source of peace and happiness. T was the vital truth you were to impl in the coming generation of hap noble-men——

ROS. Oh, don't remind me of t It was only an abortive dream, Rebe —an immature idea, that I myself longer believe in.—Ah! no, we can be ennobled from without, Rebecca

EB. [*softly*]. Not even by tranquil
Rosmer?

OS. [*thoughtfully*]. Yes — t h a t
d be the great thing—the most
ous in life, almost—if it were so.
ves uneasily.] But how can I be
in of that? How convince myself?

EB. Do you not believe me, Ros-
?

OS. Oh! Rebecca—how can I be-
in you, fully? You who have all
while been cloaking, concealing
a multitude of things!—Now you
forward with something new. If
have a secret purpose in all this,
ne plainly what it is. Is there any-
you want to gain by it? You
that I will gladly do everything I
for you.

EB. [*wringing her hands*]. Oh this
g doubt——! R o s m e r — Ros-
——!

OS. Yes, is it not terrible, Rebecca?
I cannot help it. I shall never be
to shake off the doubt. I can
be absolutely sure that you are
in pure and perfect love.

B. Is there nothing in the depths
our own heart that bears witness
ne transformation in me? And
you that it is due to you—and
alone?

S. Oh! Rebecca—I no longer be-
in my power of transforming any
My faith in myself is utterly
I believe neither in myself nor
u.

B. [*looks darkly at him*]. Then
will you be able to live your life?

S. That I don't know. I cannot
ne how. I don't think I can live
And I know of nothing in the
that is worth living for.

B. Oh, life—life will renew itself.
Let us hold fast to it, Rosmer.—We shall leave it soon enough.

ROS. [*springs up restlessly*]. Then give me my faith again! My faith in you, Rebecca! My faith in your love! Proof! I must have proof!

REB. Proof? How can I give you proof——?

ROS. You must! [*Walks across the room.*] I cannot bear this desolation—this horrible emptiness—this—this——

[*A loud knock at the hall door.*]

REB. [*starts up from her chair*]. Ah! —did you hear that?

[*The door opens.* ULRIC BRENDEL *enters. He has a white shirt on, a black coat and a good pair of boots, with his trousers tucked into them. Otherwise he is dressed as in the first act. He looks excited.*]

ROS. Ah, is it you, Mr. Brendel?

BREN. Johannes, my boy—hail—and farewell!

ROS. Where are you going so late?

BREN. Downhill.

ROS. How——?

BREN. I am going homewards, my beloved pupil. I am home-sick for the mighty Nothingness.

ROS. Something has happened to you, Mr. Brendel! What is it?

BREN. So you observe the transformation? Yes—well you may. When I last set foot in these halls—I stood before you as a man of substance, and slapped my breast-pocket.

ROS. Indeed! I don't quite understand—

BREN. But as you see this night, I am a deposed monarch on the ash-heap that was my palace.

ROS. If there is anything *I* can do for you——

BREN. You have preserved y o u r

child-like heart, Johannes. Can you grant me a loan?

ROS. Yes, yes, most willingly!

BREN. Can you spare me an ideal or two?

ROS. What do you say?

BREN. One or two cast-off ideals. It would be an act of charity. For I'm cleaned out, my boy. Ruined, beggared.

REB. Have you not delivered your lecture?

BREN. No, seductive lady. What do you think? Just as I am standing ready to pour forth the horn of plenty, I make the painful discovery that I am bankrupt.

REB. But all your unwritten works ——?

BREN. For five-and-twenty years I have sat like a miser on his double-locked treasure-chest. And then yesterday—when I open it and want to display the treasure — there's none there! The teeth of time had ground it into dust. There was nix and nothing in the whole concern.

ROS. But are you so sure of that?

BREN. There's no room for doubt, my dear fellow. The President has convinced me of it.

ROS. The President?

BREN. Well well—His Excellency then. *Ganz nach Belieben.*

ROS. What do you mean?

BREN. Peter Mortensgard, of course.

ROS. What?

BREN. [*mysteriously*]. Hush, hush, hush! Peter Mortensgard is the lord and leader of the future. Never have I stood in a more august presence. Peter Mortensgard has the secret of omnipotence. He can do whatever he will.

ROS. Oh, don't believe that.

BREN. Yes, my boy! For Pe Mortensgard never wills more than can do. Peter Mortensgard is capal of living his life without ideals. A that, do you see—that is just the migh secret of action and of victory. is the sum of the whole world's w dom. *Basta!*

ROS. [*in a low voice*]. Now I u derstand—why you leave here poo than you came.

BREN. *Bien!* Then take a *Beisp* by your ancient teacher. Rub out that he once imprinted on your mir Build not thy house on shifting san And look ahead—and feel your way before you build on this exquisite cre ture, who here lends sweetness to yo life.

REB. Is it me you mean?

BREN. Yes, my fascinating merma

REB. Why am I not to be built o

BREN. [*comes a step nearer*]. gather that my former pupil has great cause to carry forward to victo

REB. What then——?

BREN. Victory is assured. But mark me well — on one indispensa condition.

REB. Which is——?

BREN. [*taking her gently by wrist*]. That the woman who loves h shall gladly go out into the kitchen a hack off her tender, rosy-white lit finger—here—just here at the mid joint. Item, that the aforesaid lovi woman—again gladly — shall slice her incomparably-moulded left e [*Lets her go, and turns to* ROSME Farewell, my conquering Johannes.

ROS. Are you going now? In t dark night?

BREN. The dark night is best. Pe be with you.

He goes. There is a short silence the room.]

EB. [*breathes heavily*]. Oh, how e and sultry it is here!

Goes to the window, opens it, and ains standing by it.]

OS. [*sits down in the arm-chair by stove*]. There is nothing else for it r all, Rebecca. I see it. You must away.

EB. Yes, I see no choice.

OS. Let us make the most of our hour. Come here and sit by me.

EB. [*goes and sits on the sofa*]. at do you want to say to me, Ros- ?

OS. First, I want to tell you that need not feel any anxiety about r future.

EB. [*smiles*]. H'm, my future.

OS. I have long ago arranged for rything. Whatever may happen, are provided for.

EB. That too, my dear one?

OS. You might surely have known .

EB. It is many a long day since ve given a thought to such things.

OS. Yes, yes—you thought things ld always remain as they were be- n us.

EB. Yes, I thought so.

OS. So did I. But if I were to —

EB. Oh, Rosmer—you will live er than I.

OS. Surely my worthless life lies my own hands.

EB. What is this? You are never king of——!

OS. Do you think it would be so nge? After this pitiful, lament- defeat! I, who was to have borne eat cause on to victory—have I not fled from the battle before it was well begun?

REB. Take up the fight again, Rosmer! Only try—and you shall see, you will conquer. You will enoble hundreds—thousands of minds. Only try!

ROS. Oh! Rebecca—I, who no longer believe in my own mission!

REB. But your mission has stood the test already. You have ennobled one human being at least—me you have ennobled for the rest of my days.

ROS. Oh—if I dared believe you.

REB. [*pressing her hands together*]. Oh! Rosmer,—do you know of nothing —nothing that could make you believe it?

ROS. [*starts as if in fear*]. Don't speak of that! Keep away from that Rebecca! Not a word more.

REB. Yes, this is precisely what we must speak about. Do you know of anything that would kill the doubt? For *I* know of nothing in the world.

ROS. It is well for you that you do not know.—It is well for both of us.

REB. No, no, no,—I will not be put off in this way! If you know of anything that would absolve me in your eyes, I claim as my right to be told of it.

ROS. [*as if impelled against his will to speak*]. Then let us see. You say that a great love is in you; that through me your mind has been ennobled. Is it so? Is your reckoning just, Rebecca? Shall we try to prove the sum? Say?

REB. I am ready.

ROS. At any time?

REB. Whenever you please. The sooner the better.

ROS. Then let me see, Rebecca,—if

you for my sake—this very evening——[*Breaks off.*] Oh, no, no, no!

REB. Yes, Rosmer! Yes! Tell me, and you shall see.

ROS. Have you the courage—have you the will—gladly, as Ulric Brendel said—for my sake, tonight—gladly—to go the same way that Beata went?

REB. [*rises slowly from the sofa; almost voiceless*]. Rosmer——!

ROS. Yes, Rebecca—that is the question that will for ever haunt me—when you are gone. Every hour in the day it will return upon me. Oh, I seem to see you before my very eyes. You are standing out on the foot-bridge—right in the middle. Now you are bending forward over the railing—drawn dizzily downwards, downwards towards the rushing waters! No—you recoil. You have not the heart to do what she dared.

REB. But if I had the heart to do it? And the will to do it gladly? What then?

ROS. I should have to believe you then. I should recover my faith in my mission. Faith in my power to ennoble human souls. Faith in the human soul's power to attain nobility.

REB. [*takes up her shawl slowly, and puts it over her head; says with composure*]. You shall have your faith again.

ROS. Have you the will and the courage—for this, Rebecca?

REB. That you shall see tomorrow—or afterwards—when they find my body.

ROS. [*puts his hand to his forehead*]. There is a horrible fascination in this——!

REB. For I don't want to remain down there. Not longer than necessary. You must see that they find me.

ROS. [*springs up*]. But all this—is nothing but madness. Go—or stay! I will take your bare word this time.

REB. Phrases, Rosmer! Let us have no cowardly subterfuges, dear! How can you believe me on my bare word after this day?

ROS. I shrink from seeing your defeat, Rebecca!

REB. It will be no defeat.

ROS. Yes, it will. You will never bring yourself to go Beata's way.

REB. Do you think not?

ROS. Never. You are not like Beata. You are not under the dominion of a distorted view of life.

REB. But I am under the dominion of the Rosmersholm view of life—now. What I have sinned—it is fit that I should expiate.

ROS. [*looks at her fixedly*]. Is that your point of view?

REB. Yes.

ROS. [*with resolution*]. Well then, *I* stand firm in our emancipated view of life, Rebecca. There is no judge over us; and therefore we must do justice upon ourselves.

REB. [*misunderstanding him*]. Yes, that is true—that too. My going away will save what is best in you.

ROS. Oh, there is nothing left to save in me.

REB. Yes, there is. But I—after today, I should only be a sea-troll dragging down the ship that is to carry you forward. I must go overboard. Why should I remain here in the world, trailing after me my own crippled life? Why brood and brood over the happiness that my past has

feited for ever? I must give up the
ne, Rosmer.
Ros. If you go—I go with you.
Reb. [*smiles almost imperceptibly,*
ks at him, and says more softly].
, come with me—and see——
Ros. I go with you, I say.
Reb. To the foot-bridge, yes. You
w you never dare go out upon it.
Ros. Have you noticed that?
Reb. [*sadly and brokenly*]. Yes.—
vas that that made my love hopeless.
Ros. Rebecca,—now I lay my hand
your head—[*Does so*]—and I wed
as my true wife.
Reb. [*takes both his hands, and bows*
head towards his breast]. Thanks,
mer. [*Lets him go.*] And now I
go—gladly.
Ros. Man and wife should go to-
ıer.
Reb. Only to the bridge, Rosmer.
Ros. Out onto it, too. As far as you
-so far shall I go with you. For
I dare.
Reb. Are you absolutely certain—
this way is the best for you?
Ros. I am certain that it is the only
.
Reb. If you were deceiving your-
? If it were only a delusion? One
hose white horses of Rosmersholm.
Ros. It may be so. For we can
r escape from them—we of this
se.
Reb. Then stay, Rosmer!
Ros. The husband shall go with
wife, as the wife with her husband.

Reb. Yes, but first tell me this: Is it you who follow me? Or is it I who follow you?

Ros. We shall never think that question out.

Reb. But I should like to know.

Ros. We go with each other, Rebecca—I with you, and you with me.

Reb. I almost think that is the truth.

Ros. For now we two are one.

Reb. Yes. We are one. Come! We go gladly.

[*They go out hand in hand through the hall, and are seen to turn to the left. The door remains open. The room stands empty for a little while. Then the door to the right is opened by* Madam Helseth.]

Madam H. Miss West—the carriage is—— [*Looks round.*] Not here? Out together at this time of night? Well—I must say——! H'm! [*Goes out into the hall, looks round, and comes in again.*] Not in the garden seat. Ah, well, well. [*Goes to the window and looks out.*] Oh, good God! that white thing there——! My soul! They're both of them out on the bridge! God forgive the sinful creatures!—if they're not in each other's arms! [*Shrieks aloud.*] Oh—down—both of them! Out into the mill-race! Help! Help! [*Her knees tremble; she leans on to the chair-back, shaking all over; she can scarcely get the words out.*] No. No help here. The dead wife has taken them.

Volume X

Peer Gynt

THE PERSONS OF THE PLAY.

SE, *a peasant's widow.*
EER GYNT, *her son.*
WO OLD WOMEN, ASLAK, *a smith.*
WEDDING-GUESTS.
MAN AND WIFE, *newcomers.*
OLVEIG AND LITTLE HELGA, *their daughters.*
HE FARMER AT HELGSTAD.
GRID, *his daughter.*
HE BRIDEGROOM AND HIS PARENTS.
HREE SAETER-GIRLS.
HE OLD MAN OF THE DOVRE.
HE TROLLS.
ARI, *a cottar's wife.*
aster COTTON, Monsieur BALLON, Herren von EBERKOPF AND TRUMPETERSTRALE, *gentlemen.*
ITRA, *daughter of a Bedouin chief.*
ABS, FEMALE SLAVES, DANCING-GIRLS.
OFESSOR BEGRIFFENFELDT, *Dr. phil., director of the madhouse at Cairo.*
JHU, *a language-reformer,* HUSSEIN, *an eastern Minister.*
VERAL MADMEN, *with their* KEEPERS.
NORWEGIAN SKIPPER AND HIS CREW.
The action takes place in Gudbrandsdale, in a Cairo madhouse, and other localities.

ACT I

SCENE—*A wooded hillside near* E'S *farm. A river rushes down the slope. On the further side of it an old mill shed. It is a hot day in summer.*

PEER GYNT, *a strongly-built youth of twenty, comes down the pathway. His mother,* ASE, *a small, slightly-built woman, follows him, scolding angrily.*

ASE. Peer, you're lying!

PEER [*without stopping*]. No, I am not!

ASE. Well then, swear that it is true!

PEER. Swear? Why should I?

ASE. See, you dare not! It's a lie from first to last.

PEER [*stopping*]. It is true—each blessed word!

ASE [*confronting him*]. Don't you blush before your mother? First you skulk among the mountains monthlong in the busiest season, stalking reindeer in the snows; home you come then, torn and tattered, gun amissing, likewise game;—and at last, with open eyes, think to get me to believe all the wildest hunters'-lies!—Well, where did you find the buck, then?

PEER. West near Gendin.

ASE [*laughing scornfully*]. Ah! Indeed!

PEER. Keen the blast towards me swept; hidden by an alder-clump, he was scraping in the snow-crust after lichen——

ASE [*as before*]. Doubtless, yes!

PEER. Breathlessly I stood and lis-

tened, heard the crunching of his hoof, saw the branches of one antler. Softly then among the boulders I crept forward on my belly. Crouched in the moraine I peered up;—such a buck, so sleek and fat, you, I'm sure, have ne'er set eyes on.

ASE. No, of course not!

PEER. Bang, I fired! Clean he dropped upon the hillside. But the instant that he fell I sat firm astride his back, gripped him by the left ear tightly, and had almost sunk my knife-blade in his neck, behind his skull—when, behold! the brute screamed wildly, sprang upon his feet like lightning, with a back-cast of his head from my fist made knife and sheath fly, pinned me tightly by the thigh, jammed his horns against my legs, clenched me like a pair of tongs;—then forthwith away he flew right along the Gendin-Edge!

ASE [*involuntarily*]. Jesus save us ——!

PEER. Have you ever chanced to see the Gendin-Edge? Nigh on four miles long it stretches sharp before you like a scythe. Down o'er glaciers, landslips, scaurs, down the toppling grey moraines, you can see, both right and left, straight into the tarns that slumber, black and sluggish, more than seven hundred fathoms deep below you. Right along the Edge we two clove our passage through the air. Never rode I such a colt! Straight before us as we rushed 'twas as though there glittered suns. Brown-backed eagles that were sailing in the wide and dizzy void half-way 'twixt us and the tarns, dropped behind, like motes in air. Ice-floes on the shore broke crashing, but no murmur reached my ears. Only sprites of dizziness sprang, dancing round;—they sang, they swung, circle wise, past sight and hearing!

ASE. [*dizzy.*] Oh, God save me!

PEER. All at once, at a desperate break-neck spot, rose a great cock ptarmigan, flapping, cackling, terrified from the crack where he lay hidden at the buck's feet on the Edge. Then the buck shied half around, leapt sky high, and down we plunged both o us into the depths!

[ASE *totters, and catches at th trunk of a tree.* PEER GYNT *con tinues:*] Mountain walls behind us black, and below a void unfathomed First we clove through banks of mist then we clove a flock of sea-gulls so that they, in mid-air startled, flev in all directions, screaming. Down ward rushed we, ever downward. Bu beneath us something shimmered, whit ish, like a reindeer's belly.— Mother 'twas our own reflection in the glass smooth mountain tarn, shooting up to wards the surface with the same wil rush of speed wherewith we wer shooting downwards.

ASE [*gasping for breath.*] Peer God help me——! Quickly, tell——!

PEER. Buck from over, buck fron under, in a moment clashed together scattering foam-flecks all around There we lay then, floating, plashing —But at last we made our way some how to the northern shore; buck, h swam, I clung behind him:—I ra homewards——

ASE. But the buck, dear?

PEER. He's still there, for aught know;—[*Snaps his fingers, turns o his heel, and adds:*] Catch him, an you're welcome to him!

ASE. And your neck you haven

oken? Haven't broken both your ghs? and your backbone, too, is ole? Oh, dear Lord—what thanks, at praise, should be thine who ped my boy! There's a rent, though, your breeches; but it's scarce worth king of when one thinks what dread- l things might have come of such a p——! [*Stops suddenly, looks at n open-mouthed and wide-eyed; can- t find words for some time, but at t bursts out:*] Oh, you devil's story- ler, Cross of Christ, how you can ! All this screed you foist upon me, remember now, I knew it when I s a girl of twenty. Gudbrand Glesne befell, never you, you——

PEER. Me as well. Such a thing n happen twice.

ASE [*exasperated*]. Yes, a lie, turned osy-turvy, can be prinked and tin- led out, decked in plumage new and e, till none knows its lean old car- ss. That is just what you've been ing, vamping up things, wild and nd, garnishing with eagles' backs d with all the other horrors, lying ht and lying left, filling me with echless dread, till at last I recog- ed not what of old I'd heard and own!

PEER. If another talked like that half kill him for his pains.

ASE [*weeping*]. Oh, would God I a corpse; would the black earth d me sleeping! Prayers and tears n't bite upon him.— Peer, you're t, and ever will be!

PEER. Darling, pretty little mother, u are right in every word;—don't be ss, be happy——

ASE. Silence! Could I, if I would, happy, with a pig like you for son? ink how bitter I must find it, I, a poor defenceless widow, ever to be put to shame! [*Weeping again.*] How much have we now remaining from your grandsire's days of glory? Where are now the sacks of coin left behind by Rasmus Gynt? Ah, your father lent them wings,—lavished them abroad like sand, buying land in every parish, driving round in gilded chariots. Where is all the wealth he wasted at the famous winter-banquet, when each guest sent glass and bottle shivering 'gainst the wall behind him?

PEER. Where's the snow of yester-year?

ASE. Silence, boy, before your mother! See the farmhouse! Every second window-pane is stopped with clouts. Hedges, fences, all are down, beasts exposed to wind and weather, fields and meadows lying fallow, every month a new distraint——

PEER. Come now, stop this old-wife's talk! Many a time has luck seemed drooping, and sprung up as high as ever!

ASE. Salt-strewn is the soil it grew from. Lord, but you're a rare one, you, —just as pert and jaunty still, just as bold as when the Pastor, newly come from Copenhagen, bade you tell your Christian name, and declared that such a headpiece many a Prince down there might envy; till the cob your father gave him, with a sledge to boot, in thanks for his pleasant, friendly talk.— Ah, but things went bravely then! Provost, Captain, all the rest, dropped in daily, ate and drank, swilling, till they well-nigh burst. But 'tis need that tests one's neighbour. Still it grew and empty here from the day that "Gold-bag Jon" started with his pack, a pedlar. [*Dries her eyes with*

her apron.] Ah, you're big and strong enough, you should be a staff and pillar for your mother's frail old age,—you should keep the farm work going, guard the remnants of your gear;—[*Crying again.*] oh, God help me, small's the profit you have been to me, you scamp! Lounging by the hearth at home, grubbing in the charcoal embers; or, round all the country, frightening girls away from merry-makings—shaming me in all directions, fighting with the worst rapscallions——

PEER [*turning away from her.*] Let me be.

ASE [*following him*]. Can you deny that you were the foremost brawler in the mighty battle royal fought the other day at Lunde, when you raged like mongrels mad? Who was it but you that broke Blacksmith Aslak's arm for him,—or at any rate that wrenched one of his fingers out of joint?

PEER. Who has filled you with such prate?

ASE [*hotly*]. Cottar Kari heard the yells!

PEER [*rubbing his elbow*]. Maybe, but 'twas I that howled.

ASE. You?

PEER. Yes, mother,—*I* got beaten.

ASE. What d'you say?

PEER. He's limber, *he* is.

ASE. Who?

PEER. Why Aslak, to be sure.

ASE. Shame—and shame; I spit upon you! Such a worthless sot as that, such a brawler, such a sodden dram-sponge to have beaten you! [*Weeping again.*] Many a shame and slight I've suffered; but that this should come to pass is the worst disgrace of all. What if he be ne'er so limber, need you therefore be a weakling?

PEER. Though I hammer or am hammered, — still we must have lamentations. [*Laughing.*] Cheer up mother——

ASE. What? You're lying no again?

PEER. Yes, just this once. Com now, wipe your tears away;—[*Clenching his left hand.*] see,—with this sam pair of tongs, thus I held the smi bent double, while my sledge-hamm right fist——

ASE. Oh, you brawler! You w bring me with your doings to the grav

PEER. No, you're worth a bett fate; better twenty thousand time Little, ugly, dear old mother, you m safely trust my word,—all the pari shall exalt you; only wait till I ha done something—something real grand!

ASE [*contemptuously*]. You!

PEER. Who knows what may bef one!

ASE. Would you'd get so far sense one day as to do the darning your breeches for yourself!

PEER [*hotly*]. I will be a king, kaiser!

ASE. Oh, God comfort me, he's l ing all the wits that he had left!

PEER. Yes, I will! Just give time!

ASE. Give you time, you'll be prince, so the saying goes, I think!

PEER. You shall see!

ASE. Oh, hold your tongue! You as mad as mad can be.—Ah, and it's true enough, — *something* mig have come of you, had you not be steeped for ever in your lies and tra and moonshine. Hegstad's girl w

d of you. Easily you could have
her had you wooed her with a
——

EER. Could I?

SE. The old man's too feeble not
give his child her way. He is stiff-
ked in a fashion; but at last 'tis
rid rules; and where *she* leads, step
step, stumps the gaffer, grumbling,
r. [*Begins to cry again.*] Ah, my
r!—a golden girl—land entailed on
! Just think, had you set your
d upon it, you'd be now a bride-
om brave,—you that stand here
ned and tattered!

EER [*briskly*]. Come, we'll go a-
ing, then!

SE. Where?

EER. At Hegstad!

SE. Ah, poor boy; Hegstad way is
red to wooers!

EER. How is that?

SE. Ah, I must sigh! Lost the
nent, lost the luck——

EER. Speak!

SE [*sobbing*]. While in the Wester-
you in air were riding reindeer,
Mads Moen's won the girl!

EER. What! That women's-bug-
r! He——!

SE. Ay, she's taking him for hus-
d.

EER. Wait you here till I have har-
sed horse and waggon——[*Going.*]

SE. Spare your pains. They are
e wed to-morrow——

EER. Pooh; this evening I'll be
re!

SE. Fie now! Would you crown
miseries with a load of all men's
n?

EER. Never fear; 'twill all go well.
*outing and laughing at the same
e.*] Mother, jump! We'll spare the
waggon; 'twould take time to fetch the
mare up——[*Lifts her up in his arms*].

ASE. Put me down!

PEER. No, in my arms I will bear
you to the wedding! [*Wades out into
the stream.*]

ASE. Help! The Lord have mercy
on us! Peer! We're drowning——

PEER. I was born for a braver
death——

ASE. Ay, true; sure enough you'll
hang at last! [*Tugging at his hair.*]
Oh, you brute!

PEER. Keep quiet now; here the bot-
tom's slippery-slimy.

ASE. Ass!

PEER. That's right, don't spare your
tongue; that does no one any harm.
Now it's shelving up again——

ASE. Don't you drop me!

PEER. Heisan! Hop! Now we'll
play at Peer and reindeer;—[*Curvet-
ting.*] I'm the reindeer, you are Peer!

ASE. Oh, I'm going clean distraught!

PEER. There see; now we've reached
the shallows;—[*Wades ashore.*] come, a
kiss now, for the reindeer; just to
thank him for the ride——

ASE [*boxing his ears*]. This is how
I thank him!

PEER. Ow! That's a miserable fare!

ASE. Put me down!

PEER. First to the wedding. Be my
spokesman. You're so clever; talk to
him, the old curmudgeon; say Mads
Moen's good for nothing——

ASE. Put me down!

PEER. And tell him then what a rare
lad is Peer Gynt.

ASE. Truly, you may swear to that!
Fine's the character I'll give you.
Through and through I'll show you up;
all about your devil's pranks I will tell
them straight and plain——

PEER. Will you?

ASE [*kicking with rage*]. I won't stay my tongue till the old man sets his dog at you, as you were a tramp!

PEER. Hm; then I must go alone.

ASE. Ay, but I'll come after you!

PEER. Mother dear, you haven't strength——

ASE. Strength? When I'm in such a rage, I could crush the rocks to powder! Hu! I'd make a meal of flints! Put me down!

PEER. You'll promise then——

ASE. Nothing! I'll to Hegstad with you! They shall know you, what you are!

PEER. Then you'll even have to stay here.

ASE. Never! To the feast I'm coming!

PEER. That you shan't.

ASE. What will you do?

PEER. Perch you on the mill-house roof. [*He puts her up on the roof.* ASE *screams.*]

ASE. Lift me down!

PEER. Yes, if you'll listen——

ASE. Rubbish!

PEER. Dearest mother, pray——

ASE [*throwing a sod of grass at him*]. Lift me down this moment, Peer!

PEER. If I dared, be sure I would. [*Coming nearer.*] Now remember, sit quite still. Do not sprawl and kick about; do not tug and tear the shingles, —else 'twill be the worse for you; you might topple down.

ASE. You beast!

PEER. Do not kick!

ASE. I'd have you blown, like a changeling, into space!

PEER. Mother, fie!

ASE. Bah!

PEER. Rather give your blessing o my undertaking. Will you? Eh?

ASE. I'll thrash you soundly, hull ing fellow though you be!

PEER. Well, good-bye then, moth dear! Patience; I'll be back ere lon [*Is going, but turns, holds up his fing warningly, and says:*] Careful no don't kick and sprawl! [*Goes.*]

ASE. Peer!—God help me, now he off; Reindeer-rider! Liar! Hei! W you listen!—No, he's striding o'er t meadow——! [*Shrieks.*] Help! I' dizzy! [TWO OLD WOMEN, *with sac on their backs, come down the path the mill.*]

FIRST WOMAN. Christ, who's screa ing?

ASE. It is I!

SECOND WOMAN. Ase! Well, y *are* exalted!

ASE. This won't be the end of it; soon, God help me, I'll be heaven-hig

FIRST WOMAN. Bless your passin

ASE. Fetch a ladder; I must down! That devil Peer——

SECOND WOMAN. Peer! Your so

ASE. Now you can say you ha seen how he behaves.

FIRST WOMAN. We'll bear witnes

ASE. Only help me; straight Hegstad I will hasten——

SECOND WOMAN. Is he there?

FIRST WOMAN. You'll be reveng then; Aslak Smith will be there t

ASE [*wringing her hands*]. Oh, G help me with my boy; they will l him ere they're done!

FIRST WOMAN. Oh, that lot has been talked off; comfort you: w must be must be!

SECOND WOMAN. She is utterly mented. [*Calls up the hill.*] Eivi Anders! Hei! Come here!

MAN'S VOICE. What's amiss?
SECOND WOMAN. Peer Gynt has
rched his mother on the mill-house
f!
SCENE — *A hillock, covered with*
hes and heather. The highroad runs
ind it; a fence between. PEER GYNT
nes along a foothpath, goes quickly
to the fence, stops, and looks out
r the stretch of country below.
PEER. There it lies, Hegstad. Soon
have reached it. [*Puts one leg over*
fence; then hesitates.] Wonder if
rid's alone in the house now?
nades his eyes with his hand, and
ks out.] No; to the farm guests are
arming like gnats.—H'm, to turn
k now perhaps would be wisest.
raws back his leg.] Still they must
er behind your back, and whisper
that it burns right through you.
oves a few steps away from the
ce, and begins absently plucking
ves.] Ah, if I'd only a good strong
m now. Or if I could only pass to
fro unseen.— Or were I unknown.
omething proper and strong were
best thing of all, for the laughter
't bite then. [*Looks around sud-*
ly as though afraid; then hides
ng the bushes. Some WEDDING
ESTS *pass by, going downwards*
ards the farm.]
IAN [*in conversation as they pass*].
father was drunken, his mother is
k.
VOMAN. Ay, then it's no wonder
lad's good for nought. [*They pass*
Presently PEER GYNT *comes for-*
d, his face flushed with shame. He
rs after them.]
EER [*softly*]. Was it me they were
ing of? [*With a forced shrug.*]
let them chatter! After all, they
can't sneer the life out of my body.
[*Casts himself down upon the heathery slope; lies for some time flat on his back with his hands under his head, gazing up into the sky*]. What a strange sort of cloud! It is just like a horse. There's a man on it too—and saddle — and — bridle. — And after it comes an old crone on a broomstick. [*Laughs quietly to himself.*] It is mother. She's scolding and screaming: You beast! Hei you, Peer Gynt—— [*His eyes gradually close.*] Ay, now she is frightened.—Peer Gynt he rides first, and there follow him many.—His steed is gold-shod and crested with silver. Himself he has gauntlets and sabre and scabbard. His cloak it is long, and its lining is silken. Full brave is the company riding behind him. None of them, though, sits his charger so stoutly. None of them glitters like him in the sunshine.—Down by the fence stand the people in clusters, lifting their hats, and agape gazing upwards. Women are curtseying. All the world knows him, Kaiser Peer Gynt, and his thousands of henchmen. Sixpenny pieces and glittering shillings over the roadway he scatters like pebbles. Rich as a lord grows each man in the parish. High o'er the ocean Peer Gynt goes a-riding. Engelland's Prince on the seashore awaits him; there too await him all Engelland's maidens. Engelland's nobles and Engelland's Kaiser, see him come riding and rise from their banquet. Raising his crown, hear the Kaiser address him—

ASLAK THE SMITH [*to some other young men, passing along the road*]. Just look at Peer Gynt, the drunken swine——!

PEER [*starting half up*]. What, Kaiser——!

SMITH [*leaning against the fence and grinning*]. Up with you, Peer, my lad!

PEER. What the devil? The Smith! What do you want here?

SMITH [*to the others*]. He hasn't got over the Lunde-spree yet.

PEER. [*jumping up*]. You'd better be off!

SMITH. I am going, yes. But tell us, where have you dropped from, man? You've been gone six weeks. Were you troll-taken, eh?

PEER. I have been doing strange deeds, Aslak Smith!

SMITH [*winking to the others*]. Let us hear them, Peer!

PEER. They are nought to you.

SMITH [*after a pause*]. You're going to Hegstad?

PEER. No.

SMITH. Time was they said that the girl there was fond of you.

PEER. You grimy crow——!

SMITH [*falling back a little*]. Keep your temper, Peer! Though Ingrid has jilted you, others are left;—think—son of Jon Gynt! Come on to the feast; you'll find there both lambkins and widows well on——

PEER. To hell——!

SMITH. You will surely find one that will have you.— Good evening! I'll give your respects to the bride.— [*They go off, laughing and whispering.*]

PEER [*looks after them a while, then makes a defiant motion and turns half round*]. For my part, may Ingrid of Hegstad go marry whoever she pleases. It's all one to me. [*Looks at his clothes.*] My breeches are torn. I am ragged and grim.— If only I h something new to put on now. [*Stam on the ground.*] If only I could, wi a butcher-grip, tear out the scorn fr their very vitals! [*Looks round su denly.*] What was *that?* Who was that tittered behind there? H'm, certainly thought—— No no, it w no one.— I'll go home to moth [*Begins to go upwards, but stops ag and listens towards* HEGSTAD.] They playing a dance! [*Gazes and liste moves downwards step by step, his e glisten; he rubs his hands down thighs.*] How the lasses do swar Six or eight to a man! Oh, gallopi death,—I must join in the frolic But how about mother, perched up the mill-house—— [*His eyes are dra downwards again; he leaps laughs.*] Hei, how the Halling f over the green! Ay, Guttorm, he make his fiddle speak out! It gurg and booms like a foss o'er a scaur. A then all that glittering bevy of girls Yes, galloping death, I must join the frolic! [*Leaps over the fence goes down the road.*]

SCENE—*The farm-place at Hegst In the background, the dwelling-hou* A THRONG OF GUESTS. *A lively da in progress on the green.* THE FIDD *sits on a table.* THE MASTER-COOK *standing in the door-way.* COOKMA *are going to and fro between the ferent buildings. Groups of* ELDE PEOPLE *sit here and there, talkin*

WOMAN [*joins a group that is sea on some logs of wood.*] The bri Oh! yes, she is crying a bit; but t you know, isn't worth heeding.

MASTER-COOK [*in another grou* Now then, good folk, you must em the barrel.

MAN. Thanks to you, friend; but fill up too quick.

AD [*to the* FIDDLER, *as he flies past, ding* A GIRL *by the hand*]. To it , Guttorm, and don't spare the lestrings!

IRL. Scrape till it echoes out over meadows!

THER GIRLS [*standing in a ring nd a lad who is dancing*]. That's a fling!

IRL. He has legs that can lift him!

AD [*dancing*]. The roof here is , and the walls wide asunder!

RIDEGROOM [*comes whimpering up is* FATHER, *who is standing talk- with some other men, and twitches jacket*]. Father, she will not; she proud!

ATHER. What won't she do?

RIDEGROOM. She has locked herself

ATHER. Well, you must manage to the key.

RIDEGROOM. I don't know how.

ATHER. You're a nincompoop! *rns away to the others. The* BRIDE- OM *drifts across the yard.*]

AD [*comes from behind the house*]. t a bit, girls! Things'll soon be y! Here comes Peer Gynt.

MITH [*who has just come up*]. Who ed him?

ASTER-COOK. No one. [*Goes to- ds the house.*]

MITH [*to the girls*]. If he should k to you, never take notice!

IRL [*to the others*]. No, we'll pre- that we don't even see him.

EER GYNT [*comes in heated and full nimation, stops right in front of roup, and claps his hands*]. Which e liveliest girl of the lot of you?

GIRL [*as he approaches her*]. I am not.

ANOTHER [*similarly*]. I am not.

THIRD. No; nor I either.

PEER [*to a fourth*]. You come along, then, for want of a better.

GIRL. Haven't got time.

PEER [*to a fifth*]. Well then, you!

GIRL [*going*]. I'm for home.

PEER. To-night? are you utterly out of your senses?

SMITH [*after a moment, in a low voice.*] See, Peer she's taken a greybeard for partner.

PEER [*turns sharply to an elderly man*]. Where are the unbespoke girls?

MAN. Find them out. [*Goes away from him.*] [PEER GYNT *has suddenly become subdued. He glances shyly and furtively at the group. All look at him, but no one speaks. He approaches other groups. Wherever he goes there is silence; when he moves away they look after him and smile.*]

PEER [*to himself*]. Mocking looks; needle-keen whispers and smiles. They grate like a sawblade under the file! [*He slinks along close to the fence.* SOLVEIG, *leading little* HELGA *by the hand, comes into the yard, along with her* PARENTS.]

MAN [*to another, close to* PEER GYNT]. Look, here are the new folk.

OTHER. The ones from the west?

MAN. Ay, the people from Hedal.

OTHER. Ah! yes, so they are.

PEER [*places himself in the path of the new-comers, points to* SOLVEIG, *and asks the* FATHER:] May I dance with your daughter?

FATHER [*quietly*]. You may so; but first we must go to the farm-house and greet the good people. [*They go in.*]

MASTER-COOK [*to* PEER GYNT, *offer-*

ing him drink]. Since you *are* here, you'd best take a pull at the liquor.

PEER [*looking fixedly after the newcomers*]. Thanks; I'm for dancing; I am not athirst. [*The* MASTER-COOK *goes away from him.* PEER GYNT *gazes towards the house and laughs.*] How fair! Did ever you see the like? Looked down at her shoes and her snow-white apron—! And then she held on to her mother's skirt-folds, and carried a psalm-book wrapped up in a kerchief —! I must look at that girl. [*Going into the house.*]

LAD [*coming out of the house, with several others*]. Are you off so soon, Peer, from the dance?

PEER. No, no.

LAD. Then you're heading amiss! [*Takes hold of his shoulder to turn him round.*]

PEER. Let me pass!

LAD. I believe you're afraid of the Smith.

PEER. I afraid!

LAD. You remember what happened at Lunde? [*They go off, laughing, to the dancing-green.*]

SOL. [*in the doorway of the house*]. Are you not the lad that was wanting to dance?

PEER. Of course it was me; don't you know me again? [*Takes her hand.*] Come, then!

SOL. We mustn't go far, mother said.

PEER. Mother said! Mother said! Were you born yesterday?

SOL. Now you're laughing!——

PEER. Why sure, you are almost a child. Are you grown up?

SOL. I read with the pastor last spring.

PEER. Tell me your name, lass, ar then we'll talk easier.

SOL. My name is Solveig. Ar what are you called?

PEER. Peer Gynt.

SOL. [*withdrawing her hand.*] O heaven!

PEER. Why, what is it now?

SOL. My garter is loose; I must t it up tighter. [*Goes away from him*

BRIDEGROOM [*pulling at his* MOT ER'S *gown*]. Mother, she will not——

MOTHER. She will not? What?

BRIDEGROOM. She won't, mother—

MOTHER. What?

BRIDEGROOM. Unlock the door.

FATHER [*angrily, below his breath* Oh, you're fit to be tied in a stall!

MOTHER. Don't scold him. Po dear, he'll be all right yet. [*They mo away*]

LAD [*coming with a whole crowd others from the dancing-green*]. Pe have some brandy?

PEER. No.

LAD. Only a drain?

PEER [*looking darkly at him*]. G any?

LAD. Well, I won't say but I ha [*Pulls out a pocket-flask and drink* Ah! How it stings your throat! Well?

PEER. Let me try it. [*Drinks.*]

ANOTHER LAD. Now you must t mine as well, you know.

PEER. No!

LAD. Oh, nonsense; now don't b fool. Take a pull, Peer!

PEER. Well then, give me a dr [*Drinks again.*]

GIRL [*half aloud*]. Come, let's going.

PEER. Afraid of me, wench?

HIRD LAD. Who isn't afraid of
?
OURTH. At Lunde you showed
learly what trick you could play.
EER. I can do more than that, when
I get started!
IRST LAD [*whispering*]. Now he's
ing into swing!
EVERAL OTHERS [*forming a circle
nd him*]. Tell away! Tell away!
at can you——?
EER. To-morrow—!
THERS. No now, to-night!
IRL. Can you conjure, Peer?
EER. I can call up the devil!
AN. My grandmam could do that
re I was born!
EER. Liar! What *I* can do, that no
else can do. I one day conjured
into a nut. It was worm-bored,
see!
EVERAL [*laughing*]. Ay, that's easily
sed!
EER. He cursed, and he wept, and
vanted to bribe me with all sorts
hings——
NE OF THE CROWD. But he had to
n?
EER. Of course. I stopped up the
with a peg. Hei! If you'd heard
rumbling and grumbling!
IRL. Only think!
EER. It was just like a humble-bee
ing.
IRL. Have you got him still in
nut?
EER. Why, no! by this time that
has flown on his way. The grudge
Smith bears me is all *his* doing.
D. Indeed?
EER. I went to the smithy, and
ed that he would crack that same
hell for me. He promised he
d!—laid it down on his anvil; but
Aslak, you know, is so heavy of hand;
—for ever swinging that great sledge-
hammer——

A VOICE FROM THE CROWD. Did he kill the foul fiend?

PEER. He laid on like a man. But the devil showed fight, and tore off in a flame through the roof, and shattered the wall asunder.

SEVERAL VOICES. And the Smith——?

PEER. Stood there with his hands all scorched. And from that day onwards, we've never been friends. [*General laughter.*]

SOME OF THE CROWD. That yarn is a good one.

OTHERS. About his best.

PEER. Do you think I am making it up?

MAN. Oh! no, that you're certainly not; for I've heard the most on't from my grandfather——

PEER. Liar! It happened to me!

MAN. Yes, like everything else.

PEER [*with a fling*]. I can ride, I can, clean through the air, on the bravest of steeds! Oh, many's the thing I can do, I tell you! [*Another roar of laughter*].

ONE OF THE GROUP. Peer, ride through the air a bit!

MANY. Do, dear Peer Gynt——

PEER. You may spare you the trouble of begging so hard. I will ride like a hurricane over you all! Every man in the parish shall fall at my feet!

—ELDERLY MAN. Now he is clean off his head.

ANOTHER. The dolt!

THIRD. Braggart!

FOURTH. Liar!

PEER [*threatening them*]. Ay, wait till you see!

MAN [*half drunk*]. Ay, wait; you'll soon get your jacket dusted!

OTHERS. Your back beaten tender! Your eyes painted blue!

[*The crowd disperses, the elder men angry, the younger laughing and jeering*].

BRIDEGROOM [*close to* PEER GYNT]. Peer, is it true you can ride through the air?

PEER [*shortly*]. It's all true, Mads! You must know I'm a rare one!

BRIDEGROOM. Then have you got the Invisible Cloak too?

PEER. The Invisible Hat, do you mean? Yes, I have.

[*Turns away from him.* SOLVEIG *crosses the yard, leading little* HELGA.]

PEER [*goes towards them; his face lights up*]. Solveig! Oh, it is well you have come! [*Takes hold of her wrist.*] Now will I swing you round fast and fine!

SOL. Loose me!

PEER. Wherefore?

SOL. You are so wild.

PEER. The reindeer is wild, too, when summer is dawning. Come then, lass; do not be wayward now!

SOL. [*withdrawing her arm*]. Dare not.

PEER. Wherefore?

SOL. No, you've been drinking. [*Moves off with* HELGA.]

PEER. Oh, if I had but my knife-blade driven clean through the heart of them,—one and all!

BRIDEGROOM [*nudging him with his elbow*]. Peer, can't you help me to get at the bride?

PEER [*absently*]. The bride? Where is *she?*

BRIDEGROOM. In the store-house.

PEER. Ah.

BRIDEGROOM. Oh, dear Peer Gyn you must try at least!

PEER. No, you must get on witho my help. [*A thought strikes him; says softly but sharply:*] Ingrid! T store-house! [*Goes up to* SOLVEI Have you thought better on't? [So VEIG *tries to go; he blocks her path* You're ashamed to, because I've t look of a tramp.

SOL. [*hastily*]. No, that you haven that's not true at all!

PEER. Yes! And I've taken a dr as well; but that was to spite you, b cause you had hurt me. Come then

SOL. Even if I would now, I darer

PEER. Who are you frightend of

SOL. Father, most.

PEER. Father! Ay, ay; he is o of the quiet ones! One of the god eh?—Answer, come!

SOL. What shall I say?

PEER. Is your father a psalm-singe And you and your mother as well, doubt? Come, will you speak?

SOL. Let me go in peace.

PEER. No! [*In a low but sharp a threatening tone.*] I can turn mys into a troll! I'll come to your beds at midnight to-night. If you sho hear some one hissing and spitting, y mustn't imagine it's only the cat. me, lass! I'll drain out your blood a cup, and your little sister, I'll her up; ay, you must know I'm a we wolf at night;—I'll bite you all o the loins and the back—— [*Sudde changes his tone, and entreats, as if dread:*] Dance with me, Solveig!

SOL. [*looking darkly at him*]. T you were grim. [*Goes into the hou*

BRIDEGROOM [*comes sidling again*]. I'll give you an ox if yo help me!

EER. Then come!
They go out behind the house. At the e moment a crowd of men come up n the dancing green; most of them drunk. Noise and hubbub. SOL-, HELGA, *and their* PARENTS *appear ng a number of elderly people in doorway.*]
[ASTER-COOK [*to the* SMITH, *who is foremost of the crowd*]. Keep ce now!
MITH [*pulling off his jacket*]. No, must fight it out here. Peer Gynt must be taught a lesson.
OICES. Ay, let them fight for it!
THERS. No, only wrangle!
MITH. Fists must decide; for the is past words.
OLVEIG'S FATHER. Control yourself, !
ELGA. Will they beat him, mother?
AD. Let us rather tease him with is lies!
NOTHER. Kick him out of the com-y!
HIRD. Spit in his eyes!
OURTH [*to the* SMITH]. You're backing out, Smith?
MITH [*flinging away his jacket*]. jade shall be slaughtered!
OLVEIG'S MOTHER. [*to* SOLVEIG]. re, you can see how that windbag ought of.
SE [*coming up with a stick in her d*]. Is that son of mine here? Now in for a drubbing! Oh! how tily I will dang him!
MITH [*rolling up his shirt-sleeves*]. t switch is too light for a carcass his.
OME OF THE CROWD. The Smith will him!
THERS. Bang him!

SMITH [*spits on his hands and nods to* ASE]. Hang him!

ASE. What? Hang my Peer? Ay, just try if you dare;— Ase and I, we have teeth and claws!— Where is he? [*Calls across the yard:*] Peer!

BRIDEGROOM [*comes running up*]. Oh, God's death on the cross! Come father, come mother, and——!

FATHER. What is the matter?

BRIDEGROOM. Just fancy, Peer Gynt——!

ASE [*screams*]. Have they taken his life?

BRIDEGROOM. No, but Peter Gynt ——! Look, there on the hillside——!

CROWD. With the bride!

ASE [*lets her stick sink*]. Oh, the beast!

SMITH [*as if thunderstruck*]. Where the slope rises sheerest he's clambering upwards, by God, like a goat!

BRIDEGROOM [*crying*]. He's shouldered her, mother, as I might a pig!

ASE [*shaking her fist up at him*]. Would God you might fall, and——! [*Screams out in terror.*] Take care of your footing!

THE HEGSTAD FARMER [*comes in, bare-headed and white with rage*]. I'll have his life for this bride-rape yet!

ASE. Oh! no, God punish me if I let you!

ACT II.

SCENE—*A narrow path, high up in the mountains. Early morning.* PEER GYNT *comes hastily and sullenly along the path.* INGRID, *still wearing some of her bridal ornaments, is trying to hold him back.*

PEER. Get you from me!

ING. [*weeping*]. After this, Peer? Whither?

PEER. Where you will for me.

ING. [*wringing her hands*]. Oh, what falsehood!

PEER. Useless railing. Each alone must go his way.

ING. Sin—and sin again unites us!

PEER. Devil take all recollections! Devil take the tribe of women—all but *one——!*

ING. Who is that one, pray?

PEER. 'Tis not you.

ING. Who is it then?

PEER. Go! Go thither whence you came! Off! To your father!

ING. Dearest, sweetest——

PEER. Peace!

ING. You cannot mean it, surely, what you're saying?

PEER. Can and do.

ING. First to lure—and then forsake me!

PEER. And what terms have you to offer?

ING. Hegstad Farm, and more besides.

PEER. Is your psalm-book in your kerchief? Where's the gold-mane on your shoulders? Do you glance adown your apron? Do you hold your mother's skirt-fold? Speak!

ING. No, but—

PEER. Went you to the Pastor this last spring-tide?

ING. No, but Peer——

PEER. Is there shyness in your glances? When I beg, can you deny?

ING. Heaven! I think his wits are going!

PEER. Does your presence sanctify? Speak!

ING. No, but——

PEER. What's all the rest then? [*Going.*]

ING. [*blocking his way*]. Know you it will cost your neck should you fa me?

PEER. What do I care?

ING. You may win both wealth ar honour if you take me——

PEER. Can't afford.

ING. [*bursting into tears*]. Oh, yo lured me——!

PEER. You were willing.

ING. I was desperate!

PEER. Frantic I.

ING. [*threatening*]. Dearly shall yo pay for this!

PEER. Dearest payment cheap I reckon.

ING. Is your purpose set?

PEER. Like flint.

ING. Good! we'll see, then who's t winner! [*Goes downwards.*]

PEER [*stands silent a moment, th cries:*] Devil take all recollection Devil take the tribe of women!

ING. [*turning her head, and calli mockingly upwards:*] All but *one*

PEER. Yes, all but *one.*

[*They go their several ways.*]

SCENE—*Near a mountain tarn; ground is soft and marshy round abo A storm is gathering.* ASE *enters, c ing and gazing around her despairi ly, in every direction.* SOLVEIG *has d ficulty in keeping up with her.* S VEIG'S FATHER *and* MOTHER, *with* H GA, *are some way behind.*

ASE [*tossing about her arms, tearing her hair*]. All things against me with wrathful mig Heaven, and the waters, and the gr mountains! Fog-scuds from heaven down to bewilder him! The treac ous waters are lurking to murder h The mountains would crush him

dslip and rift!—And the people
! They're out after his life! God
ws they shan't have it! I can't bear
lose him! Oh, the oaf! to think
t the fiend should tempt him! [*Turn-
to* Solveig.] Now isn't it clean un-
levable this? He, that did nought
romance and tell lies;—he, whose
e strength was the strength of his
; he, that did never a stroke of
e work;—he——! Oh, a body could
h cry and laugh!— Oh, we clung
ely in sorrow and need. Ay, you
st know that my husband, he drank,
fed round the parish to roister and
te, wasted and trampled our gear
ler foot. And meanwhile at home
re sat Peerkin and I—the best we
ld do was to try to forget; for ever
e found it so hard to bear up. It's
errible thing to look fate in the
s; and of course one is glad to be
t of one's care, and try all one can
keep thought far away. Some take
brandy, and others to lies; and we
hy we took to fairy-tales of princes
trolls and of all sorts of beasts;
of bride-rapes as well. Ah, but
could have dreamt that those
il's yarns would have stuck in his
d? [*In a fresh access of terror.*]
! What a scream! It's the nixie or
ug! Peer! Peer!—Up there on that
ock——!

*She runs to the top of a little rise,
looks out over the farm.* Sol-
g's Father *and* Mother *come up.*]

ise. Not a sign to be seen!

'ather [*quietly*]. It is worst
him!

ise [*weeping*]. Oh, my Peer! Oh,
own lost lamb!

'ather [*nods mildly*]. You may
say lost.

Ase. Oh! no, don't talk like that! He is so clever. There's no one like him.

Father. You foolish woman!

Ase. Oh! ay; oh! ay; foolish I am, but the boy's all right!

Father [*still softly and with mild eyes*]. His heart is hardened, his soul is lost.

Ase [*in terror*]. No, no, he can't be so hard, our Lord!

Father. Do you think he can sigh for his debt of sin?

Ase [*eagerly*]. No, but he can ride through the air on a buck, though!

Mother. Christ, are you mad?

Father. Why, what do you mean?

Ase. Never a deed is too great for him. You shall see, if only he lives so long——

Father. Best if you saw him on the gallows hanging.

Ase [*shrieks*]. Oh, cross of Christ!

Father. In the hangman's hands, it may be his heart would be turned to repentance.

Ase [*bewildered*]. Oh, you'll soon talk me out of my senses! We must find him!

Father. To rescue his soul.

Ase. And his body! If he's stuck in the swamp, we must drag him out; if he's taken by trolls, we must ring the bells for him.

Father. H'm—here's a sheep-path—

Ase. The Lord will repay you your guidance and help!

Father. It's a Christian's duty.

Ase. Then the others, fie! they are heathens all; there wasn't one that would go with us——

Father. They knew him too well.

Ase. He was too good for them!

[*Wrings her hands.*] And to think—and to think that his life is at stake!

FATHER. Here are tracks of a man.

ASE. Then it's here we must search!

FATHER. We'll scatter around on this side of our sæter. [*He and his wife go on ahead.*]

SOLVEIG [*to* ASE]. Say on; tell me more.

ASE [*drying her eyes*]. Of my son, you mean?

SOL. Yes;—Tell everything!

ASE [*smiles and tosses her head*]. Everything?—Soon you'd be tired!

SOL. Sooner by far will you tire of the telling than I of the hearing.

SCENE—*Low, treeless heights, close under the mountain moorlands; peaks in the distance. The shadows are long; it is late in the day.* PEER GYNT *comes running at full speed, and stops short on the hillside.*

PEER. The parish is all at my heels in a pack. Every man of them armed or with gun or with club. Foremost I hear the old Hegstad-churl howling.—Now it's noised far and wide that Peer Gynt is abroad! It is different, this, from a bout with a smith. This is life! Every limb grows as strong as a bear's. [*Strikes out with his arms and leaps in the air.*] To crush, overturn, stem the rush of the foss! To strike! Wrench the fir-tree right up by the root! This is life! This both hardens and lifts one high! To hell then with all of the savourless lies!

THREE SAETER GIRLS [*rush across the hillside, screaming and singing*]. Trond of the Valfjeld! Bard and Kare! Troll-pack! To-night would you sleep in our arms?

PEER. To whom are you calling?

GIRLS. To the trolls! to the troll

FIRST GIRL. Trond, come with kin ness!

SECOND GIRL. Bard, come with forc

THIRD GIRL. The cots in the sæt are all standing empty!

FIRST GIRL. Force is kindness!

SECOND GIRL. And kindness is forc

THIRD GIRL. If lads are awantin one plays with the trolls!

PEER. Why, where are lads, the

ALL THREE [*with a hoarse laugh*]. They cannot come hither!

FIRST GIRL. Mine called me h sweetheart and called me his darlin Now he has married a grey-head widow.

SECOND GIRL. Mine met a gips wench north on the upland. Now th are tramping the country together.

THIRD GIRL. Mine put an end our bastard brat. Now his head's gri ning aloft on a stake.

ALL THREE. Trond of the Valfjel Bard and Kare! Troll-pack! To-nig would you sleep in our arms?

PEER [*stands, with a sudden leap, the midst of them*]. I'm a three-head troll, and the boy for three girls!

GIRLS. Are you *such* a lad, eh?

PEER. You shall judge for yo selves!

FIRST GIRL. To the hut! To the h

SECOND GIRL. We have mead!

PEER. Let it flow!

THIRD GIRL. No cot shall sta empty this Saturday night!

SECOND GIRL [*kissing him*]. He sp kles and glisters like white-heated ir

THIRD GIRL [*doing likewise*]. Lik baby's eyes from the blackest tarn.

PEER [*dancing in the midst of the* Heavy of heart and wanton of mi

e eyes full of laughter, the throat of
rs!

GIRLS [*making mocking gestures*
ards the mountain-tops; scream-
and singing]. Trond of the
lfjeld! Bard and Kare! Troll-
k!—To-night will you sleep in our
ns?

They dance away over the heights,
h PEER GYNT *in their midst.*]

SCENE—*Among the Ronde moun-*
ns. Sunset. Shining snow-peaks all
und. PEER GYNT *enters, dizzy and*
ildered.

PEER. Tower over tower arises! Hei,
at a glittering gate! Stand! Will
stand! It's drifting further and
ther away! High on the vane the
k stands lifting his wings for flight;
lue spread the rifts and bluer,
ked is the fell and barred.—What
those trunks and tree-roots, that
w from the ridge's clefts? They are
riors heron-footed! Now they, too,
fading away. A shimmering like
ibow-streamers goes shooting
ough eyes and brain. What is it,
t far-off chiming? What's weigh-
my eyebrows down? Hu, how my
ehead's throbbing—a tightening red-
ring——! I cannot think who the
il has bound it around my head!
nks down.] Flight o'er the Edge of
adin—stuff and accursed lies! Up
the steepest hill-wall with the
le,—and a whole day drunk; hunted
hawks and falcons, threatened by
ls and such, sporting with crazy
aches:—lies and accursed stuff!
izes long upwards.] Yonder sail
brown eagles. Southward the wild
se fly. And here I must splash and
nble in quagmire and filth knee-
deep! [*Springs up.*] I'll fly too! I will wash myself clean in the bath of the keenest winds! I'll fly high! I will plunge myself fair in the glorious christening-font! I will soar far over the sæter; I will ride myself pure of soul; I will forth o'er the salt sea waters, and high over Engelland's prince! Ay, gaze as ye may, young maidens; my ride is for none of you; you're wasting your time in waiting—! Yet maybe I'll swoop down, too.—What has come of the two brown eagles—? They've vanished, the devil knows where!—There's the peak of a gable rising; it's soaring on every hand; it's growing from out the ruins; —see, the gateway is standing wide! Ha-ha, yonder house, I know it; it's grandfather's new-built farm! Gone are the clouts from the windows; the crazy old fence is gone. The lights gleam from every casement; there's a feast in the hall to-night. There, that was the provost clinking the back of his knife on his glass;—there's the captain flinging his bottle and shivering the mirror to bits.—Let them waste; let it all be squandered! Peace, mother; what need we care! 'Tis the rich Jon Gynt gives the banquet; hurrah for the race of Gynt! What's all this bustle and hubbub? Why do they shout and bawl? The captain is calling the son in;—oh, the provost would drink my health. In then, Peer Gynt, to the judgment; it rings forth in song and shout: Peer Gynt, thou art come of great things, and great things shall come of thee!

[*Leaps forward, but runs his head against a rock, falls, and remains stretched on the ground.*]

SCENE—*A hillside, wooded with great soughing trees. Stars are gleaming through the leaves; birds are singing in the tree-tops.* A GREEN-CLAD WOMAN *is crossing the hillside;* PEER GYNT *follows her, with all sorts of lover-like antics.*

GREEN-CLAD ONE [*stops and turns around*]. Is it true?

PEER [*drawing his finger across his throat*]. As true as my name is Peer; —as true as that you are a lovely woman! Will you have me? You'll see what a fine man I'll be; you shall neither tread the loom nor turn the spindle. You shall eat all you want, till you're ready to burst. I never will drag you about by the hair——

GREEN-CLAD ONE. Nor beat me?

PEER. No, can you think I would? We kings' sons never beat women and such.

GREEN-CLAD ONE. You're a king's son?

PEER. Yes.

GREEN-CLAD ONE. I'm the Dovre-King's daughter.

PEER. Are you? See there, now, how well that fits in!

GREEN-CLAD ONE. Deep in the Ronde has father his palace.

PEER. My mother's is bigger, or much I'm mistaken.

GREEN-CLAD ONE. Do you know my father? His name is King Brose.

PEER. Do you know my mother? Her name is Queen Ase.

GREEN-CLAD ONE. When my father is angry the mountains are riven.

PEER. They reel when my mother by chance falls a-scolding.

GREEN-CLAD ONE. My father can kick e'en the loftiest roof-tree.

PEER. My mother can ride throu the rapidest river.

GREEN-CLAD ONE. Have you oth garments besides those rags?

PEER. Ho, you should just see n Sunday clothes!

GREEN-CLAD ONE. My week-d gown is of gold and silk.

PEER. It looks to me like tow a straws.

GREEN-CLAD ONE. Ay, there is o thing you must remember:—this is t Ronde-folk's use and wont: all our p sessions have twofold form. When y shall come to my father's hall, it w may chance that you're on the point thinking you stand in a dismal morai

PEER. Well now, with us it's p cisely the same. Our gold will seem you litter and trash! And you'll thi mayhap, every glittering pane is noug but a bunch of old stockings and clou

GREEN-CLAD ONE. Black it see white, and ugly seems fair.

PEER. Big it seems little, and di seems clean.

GREEN-CLAD ONE [*falling on neck*]. Ay, Peer, now I see that we you and I!

PEER. Like the leg and the trous the hair and the comb.

GREEN-CLAD ONE [*calls away o the hillside*]. Bridal-steed! Brid steed. Come, bridal-steed mine!

[*A gigantic pig comes running with a rope's end for a bridle and old sack for a saddle.* PEER GY *vaults on its back, and seats the* GREE CLAD ONE *in front of him.*]

PEER. Hark-away! Through Ronde-gate gallop we in! Gee-up, g up, my courser fine!

GREEN-CLAD ONE [*tenderly*]. but lately I wandered and moped a

d—. One never can tell what may pen to one!

EER [*thrashing the pig and trot- off*]. You may know the great by r riding-gear!

CENE—*The Royal Hall of the King he Dovre-Trolls. A great assembly* TROLL-COURTIERS, GNOMES, *and* WNIES. THE OLD MAN OF THE RE *sits on the throne, crowned, and his sceptre in his hand. His* CHIL- N *and* NEAREST RELATIONS *are ged on both sides.* PEER GYNT *ds before him. Violent commotion he hall.*

ROLL-COURTIERS. Slay him! a istian-man's son has deluded the re-King's loveliest maid!

ROLL-IMP. May I hack him on the ers?

NOTHER. May I tug him by the ?

ROLL-MAIDEN. Hu, hei, let me bite in the haunches!

ROLL-WITCH [*with a ladle*]. Shall e boiled into broth and bree?

NOTHER TROLL-WITCH [*with a pper*]. Shall he roast on a spit or rowned in a stewpan?

LD MAN OF THE DOVRE. Ice to blood, friends! [*Beckons his coun- rs nearer around him.*] Don't let talk big. We've been drifting rn in these latter years; we can't what's going to stand or to fall, and e's no sense in turning recruits y. Besides the lad's body has scarce emish, and he's strongly-built too, see aright. It's true, he has only a le head; but my daughter, too, has nore than one. Three-headed trolls going clean out of fashion; one hardly sees even a two-header now, and even those heads are but so-so ones. [*To* PEER GYNT.] It's my daughter then, you demand of me?

PEER. Your daughter and the realm to her dowry, yes.

OLD MAN. You shall have the half while I'm still alive, and the other half when I come to die.

PEER. I'm content with that.

OLD MAN. Ay, but stop, my lad;—*you* also have some undertakings to give. If you break even one, the whole pact's at an end, and you'll never get away from here living. First of all you must swear that you'll never give heed to aught that lies outside the Rondehills' bounds; day you must shun, and deeds, and each sunlit spot.

PEER. Only call me king, and that's easy to keep.

OLD MAN. And next—now for putting your wits to the test. [*Draws himselm up in his seat.*]

OLDEST TROLL-COURTIER [*to* PEER GYNT]. Let us see if you have a wisdom-tooth that can crack the Dovre-King's riddle-nut!

OLD MAN. What difference is there 'twixt trolls and men?

PEER. No difference at all, as it seems to me. Big trolls would roast you and small trolls would claw you;—with us it were likewise, if only they dared.

OLD MAN. True enough; in that and in more we're alike. Yet morning is morning, and even is even, and there *is* a difference all the same.—Now let me tell you wherein it lies: Out yonder, under the shining vault, among men the saying goes: "Man, be thyself!" At home here with us, 'mid the tribe of the

trolls, the saying goes: "Troll, to thyself be—enough!"

TROLL-COURTIER [*to* PEER GYNT]. Can you fathom the depth?

PEER. It strikes me as misty.

OLD MAN. My son, that "Enough," that most potent and sundering word, must be graven upon your escutcheon.

PEER [*scratching his head*]. Well, but—

OLD MAN. It *must,* if you here would be master!

PEER. Oh! well, let it pass; after all, it's no worse——

OLD MAN. And next you must learn to appreciate our homely, everyday way of life. [*He beckons; two* TROLLS *with pigs'-heads, white night-caps, and so forth, bring in food and drink.*] The cow gives cakes and the bullock mead; ask not if its taste be sour or sweet; the main matter is, and you mustn't forget it, it's all of it home-brewed.

PEER [*pushing the things away from him*]. The devil fly off with your home-brewed drinks! I'll never get used to the ways of this land.

OLD MAN. The bowl's given in, and it's fashioned of gold. Whoso owns the gold bowl, him my daughter holds dear.

PEER [*pondering*]. It is written: Thou shalt bridle the natural man;—and I daresay the drink may in time seem less sour. So be it! [*Complies.*]

OLD MAN. Ay, that was sagaciously said. You spit?

PEER. One must trust to the force of habit.

OLD MAN. And next you must throw off your Christian-man's garb; for this you must know to our Dovre's renown: here all things are mountain-made, nought's from the dale, except the s bow at the end of your tail.

PEER [*indignant*]. I haven't a ta

OLD MAN. Then, of course you m get one. See my Sunday-tail, Chamb lain, fastened to him.

PEER. I'll be hanged if you Would you make me a fool?

OLD MAN. None comes courting child with no tail at his rear.

PEER. Make a beast of a man!

OLD MAN. Nay, my son, you n take; I make you a mannerly woo no more. A bright orange bow w allow you to wear, and that passes h for the highest of honours.

PEER [*reflectively*]. It's true, as saying goes: Man's but a mote. A it's wisest to follow the fashion a Tie away!

OLD MAN. You're a tractable fell I see.

COURTIER. Just try with what gr you can waggle and whisk it!

PEER [*peevishly*]. Ha, would y force me to go still further? Do y ask me to give up my Christian fait

OLD MAN. No, that you are welco to keep in peace. Doctrine goes fr upon that there's no duty; it's the o ward cut one must tell a troll by. we're only at one in our manners a dress, you may hold as your faith wl to us is a horror.

PEER. Why, in spite of your ma conditions, you are a more reasona chap than one might have expected.

OLD MAN. We troll-folk, my s are less black than we're painte that's another distinction between y and us.—But the serious part of meeting is over; now let us gladden ears and our eyes. Music-maid, for Set the Dovre-harp sounding! Da

-maid, forth! Tread the Dovre
l's floor! [*Music and a dance.*]

COURTIER. How like you it?

PEER. Like it? Hm——

OLD MAN. Speak without fear!
iat see you?

PEER. Why, something unspeakably
m; a bell-cow with her hoof on a
-harp strumming, a sow in socklets
rip to the tune.

COURTIERS: Eat him!

OLD MAN. His sense is but human,
iember!

TROLL-MAIDENS. Hu, tear away both
ears and his eyes!

GREEN-CLAD ONE [*weeping*]. Hu-
! And this we must hear and put
with, when I and my sister make
sic and dance.

PEER. Oho, was it you? Well, a
e at the feast, you must know, is
er unkindly meant.

GREEN-CLAD ONE. Can you swear it
s so?

PEER. Both the dance and the music
re utterly charming, the cat claw me
.

OLD MAN. This same human nature's
ingular thing; it sticks to people so
ngely long. If it gets a gash in the
t with us, it heals up at once,
ugh a scar may remain. My son-in-
, now, is as pliant as any; he's will-
ly thrown off his Christian-man's
b, he's willingly drunk from our
lice of mead, he's willingly tied on
tail to his back,—so willing, in
rt, did we find him in all things, I
ught to myself the old Adam, for
ain, had for good and all been
ed out of doors; but lo! in two
kes he's atop again! Ay ay, my son,
must treat you, I see, to cure this
tilent human nature.

PEER. What will you do?

OLD MAN. In your left eye, first, I'll scratch you a bit, till you see awry; but all that you see will seem fine and brave. And then I'll just cut your right window-pane out——

PEER. Are you drunk?

OLD MAN [*lays a number of sharp instruments on the table*]. See, here are the glazier's tools. Blinkers you'll wear, like a raging bull. Blinkers you'll recognise that your bride is lovely,—and ne'er will your vision be troubled, as now, with bell-cows harping and sows that dance.

PEER. This is madman's talk!

OLDEST COURTIER. It's the Dovre-King speaking; it's he that is wise, and it's you that are crazy!

OLD MAN. Just think how much worry and mortification you'll thus escape from, year out, year in. You must remember, your eyes are the fountain of the bitter and searing lye of tears.

PEER. That's true; and it says in our sermon-book: If thine eye offend thee, then pluck it out. But tell me, when will my sight heal up into human sight?

OLD MAN. Nevermore, my friend.

PEER. Indeed! In that case, I'll take my leave.

OLD MAN. What would you without?

PEER. I would go my way.

OLD MAN. No, stop! It's easy to slip in here, but the Dovre-King's gate doesn't open outwards.

PEER. You wouldn't detain me by force, I hope?

OLD MAN. Come now, just listen to reason, Prince Peer! You have gifts for trolldom. He acts, does he not, even now in a passably troll-like fashion? And you'd fain be a troll?

PEER. Yes, I would, sure enough. For a bride and a well-managed kingdom to boot, I can put up with losing a good many things. But there is a limit to all things on earth. The tail I've accepted, it's perfectly true; but no doubt I can loose what the Chamberlain tied. My breeches I've dropped; they were old and patched; but no doubt I can button them on again. And lightly enough I can slip my cable from these your Dovrefield ways of life. I am willing to swear that a cow is a maid; an oath one can always eat up again;—but to know that one never can free oneself, that one can't even die like a decent soul; to live as a hill-troll for all one's days—to feel that one never can beat a retreat,—as the book has it, *that's* what your heart is set on; but that is a thing I can never agree to.

OLD MAN. Now, sure as I live, I shall soon lose my temper; and then I am not to be trifled with. You pasty-faced loon! Do you know who I am? First with my daughter you make too free——

PEER. There you lie in your throat!

OLD MAN. You must marry her.

PEER. Do you dare to accuse me ——?

OLD MAN. What? Can you deny that you lusted for her in heart and eye?

PEER [*with a snort of contempt*]. No more? Who the deuce cares a straw for that?

OLD MAN. It's ever the same with this humankind. The spirit you're ready to own with your lips, but in fact nothing counts that your fists cannot handle. So you really think, then, that lust matters nought? Wait; you shall soon have ocular proof of it——

PEER. You don't catch me wit bait of lies!

GREEN-CLAD ONE. My Peer, ere year's out, you'll be a father.

PEER. Open doors! let me go!

OLD MAN. In a he-goat's skin, shall have the brat after you.

PEER [*mopping the sweat off brow*]. Would I could waken!

OLD MAN. Shall we send him to palace?

PEER. You can send him to the p ish!

OLD MAN. Well well, Prince Pe that's your own look-out. But thing's certain, what's done is do and your offspring, too, will be s to grow; such mongrels shoot up am ingly fast—

PEER. Old man, don't act like headstrong ox! Hear reason, maid Let's come to terms. You must kn I'm neither a prince nor rich;—a whether you measure or whether y weigh me, be sure you won't gain m by making me yours.

[THE GREEN-CLAD ONE *is taken and is carried out by* TROLL-MAIDS.]

OLD MAN [*looks at him for a wh in high disdain; then says:*] Dash h to shards on the rock-walls, childr

TROLL-IMPS. Oh! dad, mayn't we p owl-an-eagle first! The wolf-ga Grey-mouse and glow-eyed cat!

OLD MAN. Yes, but quick. I worried and sleepy. Good-night! [*goes.*]

PEER [*hunted by the* TROLL-IM Let me be, devil's imps! [*Tries to cape up the chimney.*]

IMPS. Come brownies! Come nix Bite him behind!

PEER. Ow! [*Tries to slip down cellar trap-door.*]

MPS. Shut up all the crannies!
ROLL-COURTIER. Now the small-fry happy!
EER [*struggling with a little* IMP *has bit himself fast to his ear*]. go will you, beast!
OURTIER [*hitting him across the ers*]. Gently, you scamp, with a n of royalty!
EER. A rat-hole—! [*Runs to it.*]
MPS. Be quick, Brother Nixie, and k it!
EER. The old one was bad, but the ngsters are worse!
MPS. Slash him!
EER. Oh, would I were small as a se! [*Rushing around.*]
MPS [*swarming round him*]. Close ring! Close the ring!
EER [*weeping*]. Would that I were use! [*He falls.*]
MPS. Now into his eyes!
EER [*buried in a heap of* IMPS]. her, help me, I die! [*Church-bells d far away.*]
MPS. Bells in the mountain! The k-Frock's cows!
THE TROLLS *take to flight, amid a used uproar of yells and shrieks. palace collapses; everything dis- ears.*]
ENE—*Pitch darkness.* PEER GYNT *eard beating and slashing about with a large bough.*
EER. Answer! Who are you?
VOICE IN THE DARKNESS. Myself.
EER. Clear the way!
OICE. Go roundabout, Peer! The roomy enough.
EER [*tries to force a passage at an- r place, but strikes against some- g*]. Who are *you?*
OICE. Myself. Can you say the e?

PEER. I can say what I will; and my sword can smite! Mind yourself! Hu, hei, now the blow falls crushing! King Saul slew hundreds; Peer Gynt slew thousands! [*Cutting and slashing.*] Who *are* you?

VOICE. Myself.

PEER. That stupid reply you may spare; it doesn't clear up the matter. *What* are you?

VOICE. The great Boyg.

PEER. Ah, indeed! The riddle was black; now I'd call it grey. Clear the way then, Boyg!

VOICE. Go roundabout, Peer!

PEER. No, through! [*Cuts and slashes.*] There he fell! [*Tries to advance, but strikes against something.*] Ho ho, are there more here?

VOICE. The Boyg, Peer Gynt, the one only one. It's the Boyg that's unwounded, and the Boyg that was hurt, it's the Boyg that is dead, and the Boyg that's alive.

PEER [*throws away the branch*]. The weapon is troll-smeared; but I have my fists! [*Fights his way forward.*]

VOICE. Ay, trust to your fists, lad, trust to your body. Hee-hee, Peer Gynt, so you'll reach the summit.

PEER [*falling back again*]. Forward or back, and it's just as far;—out or in and it's just as strait! He is *there!* And *there!* And he's round the bend! No sooner I'm out than I'm back in the ring.—Name who you are! Let me see you! What are you?

VOICE. The Boyg.

PEER [*groping around*]. Not dead, not living; all slimy; misty. Not so much as a shape! It's as bad as to battle in a cluster of snarling, half-awakened bears! [*Screams.*] Strike back at me, can't you!

VOICE. The Boyg isn't mad.

PEER. Strike!

VOICE. The Boyg strikes not.

PEER. Fight! You shall!

VOICE. The great Boyg conquers, but does not fight.

PEER. Were there only a nixie here that could prick me! Were there only as much as a year-old troll! Only something to fight with. But here there is nothing.—Now he's snoring! Boyg!

VOICE. What's your will?

PEER. Use force!

VOICE. The great Boyg conquers in all things without it.

PEER [*biting his own arms and hands*]. Claws and ravening teeth in my flesh! I must feel the drip of my own warm blood. [*A sound is heard like the wing-strokes of great birds.*]

BIRD-CRIES. Comes he now, Boyg.

VOICE. Ay, step by step.

BIRD-CRIES. All our sisters far off! Gather here to the tryst!

PEER. If you'd save me now, lass, you must do it quick! Gaze not adown so, lowly and bending.—Your clasp-book! Hurl it straight into his eyes!

BIRD-CRIES. He totters.

VOICE. We have him.

BIRD-CRIES. Sisters! Make haste!

PEER. Too dear the purchase one pays for life in such a heart-wasting hour of strife. [*Sinks down.*]

BIRD-CRIES. Boyg, there he's fallen! Seize him! Seize him!

[*A sound of bells and of psalm-singing is heard far away.*]

BOYG [*shrinks up to nothing, and says in a gasp:*] He was too strong. There were women behind him.

SCENE. *Sunrise. The mountain-side in front of Ase's saeter. The door is shut; all is silent and deserted.* PEER GYNT *is lying asleep by the wall of the saeter.*

PEER [*wakens, and looks about h with dull and heavy eyes. He spit* What wouldn't I give for a pickl herring! [*Spits again, and at the sa moment catches sight of* HELGA, *w appears carrying a basket of foo* Ha, child, are you there? What is you want?

HEL. It is Solveig—

PEER [*jumping up*]. Where is *sh*

HEL. Behind the sæter.

SOL. If you come nearer, I'll r away!

PEER [*stopping short*]. Perha you're afraid I might take you in r arms?

SOL. For shame!

PEER. Do you know where I w last night?—Like a horse-fly the Dov King's daughter is after me.

SOL. Then it was well that the be were set ringing.

PEER. Peer Gynt's not the lad th can lure astray.—What do you say?

HEL. [*crying*]. Oh, she's runni away! [*Running after her.*] Wait

PEER [*catches her by the arm*]. Lo here, what I have in my pocket! silver button, child! You shall have —only speak for me!

HEL. Let me be; let me go!

PEER. There you have it.

HEL. Let go; there's the basket food.

PEER. God pity you if you don't-

HEL. Uf, how you scare me!

PEER [*gently; letting her go*]. I only meant: beg her not to forg me! [HELGA *runs off.*]

ACT III.

SCENE—*Deep in the pine-woo*

y autumn weather. Snow is fall-
. PEER GYNT *stands in his shirt-*
ves, felling timber.
'EER [*hewing at a large fir-tree with*
sted branches]. Oh! ay, you are
gh, you ancient churl; but it's all
ain, for you'll soon be down. [*Hews*
t again.] I see well enough you've
chain-mail shirt, but I'll hew it
ough, were it never so stout.—Ay,
you're shaking your twisted arms;
've reason enough for your spite
rage; but none the less you must
d the knee—! [*Breaks off sudden-*
Lies! 'Tis an old tree, and nothing
re. Lies! It was never a steel-clad
rl; it's only a fir-tree with fissured
k.—It is heavy labour this hewing
ber; but the devil and all when
hew and dream too. I'll have
e with it all—with this dwell-
in mist,—and, broad-awake, dream-
your senses away. — You're
outlaw, lad! You are banned
he woods. [*Hews for a while rap-*
.] Ay, an outlaw, ay. You've no
her now to spread your table and
g your food. If you'd eat, my lad,
must help yourself, fetch your ra-
s, raw from the wood and stream,
t your own fir-roots and light your
fire, bustle around, and arrange
prepare things. Would you clothe
rself warmly, you must stalk your
; would you found you a
se, you must quarry the stones;
ld you build up its walls, you
t fell the logs, and shoulder
n all to the building place.—[*His*
sinks down; he gazes straight in
t of him.] Brave shall the build-
be. Tower and vane shall rise from
roof-tree, high and fair. And then
ill carve, for the knob on the gable,
a mermaid, shaped like a fish from the navel. Brass shall there be on the vane and the door-locks. Glass I must see and get hold of too. Strangers, passing, shall ask amazed what that is glittering far on the hillside. [*Laughs angrily.*] Devil's own lies! There they come again. You're an outlaw, lad! [*hewing vigorously.*] A bark-thatched hovel is shelter enough both in rain and frost. [*Looks up at the tree.*] Now he stands wavering. There; only a kick, and he topples and measures his length on the ground;—the thick-swarming undergrowth shudders around him! [*Begins lopping the branches from the trunk; suddenly he listens, and stands motionless with his axe in the air.*] There's some one after me!—Ay, are you that sort, old Hegstad-churl;—would you play me false? [*Crouches behind the tree, and peeps over it.*] A lad! One only. He seems afraid. He peers all round him. What's that he hides 'neath his jacket? A sickle. He stops and looks round,—now he lays his hand on a fence-rail flat. What's this now? Why does he lean like that—? Ugh, ugh! Why, he's chopped his finger off! A whole finger off!—He bleeds like an ox.—Now he takes to his heels with his fist in a clout. [*Rises.*] What a devil of a lad! An unmendable finger! Right off! And with no one compelling him to it! Ho, now I remember! It's only thus you can 'scape from having to serve the King. That's it. They wanted to send him soldiering, and of course the lad didn't want to go.—But to chop it off —? To sever for good and all—? Ay, think of it—wish it done—*will* it to boot,—but *do* it—! No, that's past my understanding!

[*Shakes his head a little; then goes on with his work.*]

SCENE—*A room in* ASE'S *house. Everything in disorder; boxes standing open; wearing apparel strewn around. A cat is lying on the bed.* ASE *and the* COTTAR'S WIFE *are hard at work packing things together and putting them straight.*

ASE [*running to one side*]. Kari, come here!

KARI. What now?

ASE [*on the other side*]. Come here —! Where is—? Where shall I find —? Tell me where—? What am I seeking? I'm out of my wits! Where is the key of the chest?

KARI. In the key-hole.

ASE. What is that rumbling?

KARI. The last cart-load they're driving to Hegstad.

ASE [*weeping*]. How glad I'd be in the black chest myself to be driven away! Oh, what must a mortal abide and live through! God help me in mercy! The whole house is bare! What the Hegstad-churl left now the Bailiff has taken. Not even the clothes on my back have they spared. Fie! Shame on them all that have judged so hardly! [*Seats herself on the edge of the bed.*] Both the land and the farm-place are lost to our line; the old man was hard, but the law was still harder;—there was no one to help me, and none would show mercy; Peer was away; not a soul to give counsel.

KARI. But here, in this house, you may dwell till you die.

ASE. Ay, the cat and I live on charity.

KARI. God help you, mother; your Peer's cost you dear.

ASE. Peer? Why, you're out of your senses, sure! Ingrid came ho none the worse in the end. The ri thing had been to hold Satan to reck ing;—he was the sinner, ay, he none other; the ugly beast temp my poor boy astray!

KARI. Had I not better send wor the parson? Mayhap you're worse t you think you are.

ASE. To the parson? Truly I most think so. [*Starts up.*] But, God, I can't! I'm the boy's own moth and help him I must; it's no more t my duty; I must do what I can w the rest forsake him. They've left this coat; I must patch it up. I w I dared snap up the fur-rug as w What's come of the hose?

KARI. They are there, 'mid t rubbish.

ASE [*rummaging about*]. Why, w have we here? I declare it's an casting-ladle, Kari! With this he wo play button-moulder, would melt, then shape, and then stamp them. day—there was company—in the came, and begged of his father a lu of tin. "Not tin," says Jon, "but K Christian's coin; silver; to show yo the son of Jon Gynt." God par him, Jon; he was drunk, you see, then he cared neither for tin nor gold. Here are the hose. Oh, the nothing but holes; they want darni Kari!

KARI. Indeed but they do.

ASE. When that is done, I m get to bed; I feel so broken, and fr and ill—[*Joyfully.*] Two woolen-shi Kari;—they've passed them by!

KARI. So they have indeed.

ASE. It's a bit of luck. One of two you may put aside; or rathe

ink we'll e'en take them both;—the
e he has on is so worn and thin.
KARI. But oh, Mother Ase, I fear
s a sin!
ASE. Maybe; but remember, the
iest holds out pardon for this and
r other sinnings.
SCENE—*In front of a settler's newly-*
ilt hut in the forest. A reindeer's
rns over the door. The snow is lying
ep around. It is dusk.
PEER GYNT *is standing outside the*
or, fastening a large wooden bar to

PEER [*laughing betweenwhiles*]. Bars
nust fix me; bars that can fasten the
or against troll-folk, and men, and
men. Bars I must fix me; bars that
n shut out all the cantankerous little
ogoblins.— They come with the dark-
ss, they knock and they rattle: Open,
er Gynt, we're as nimble as thoughts
! 'Neath the bedstead we bustle, we
ke in the ashes, down the chimney
hustle like fiery-eyed dragons. Hee-
e! Peer Gynt; think you staples
l planks can shut out cantankerous
ogoblin-thoughts?
SOLVEIG *comes on snow-shoes over*
heath; she has a shawl over her
d, and a bundle in her hand.]
SOL. God prosper your labour. You
st not reject me. You sent for me
ner, and so you must take me.
PEER. Solveig! It cannot be——!
but it is!— And you're not afraid
come near to me!
OL. One message you sent me by
e Helga; others came after in storm
in stillness. All that your mother
bore me a message, that brought
h others when dreams sank upon
Nights full of heaviness, blank,
oty days, brought me the message
that now I must come. It seemed as though life had been quenched down there; I could nor laugh nor weep from the depths of my heart. I knew not for sure how you might be minded; I knew but for sure what I should do and must do.

PEER. But your father?

SOL. In all of God's wide earth I have none I can call either father or mother. I have loosed me from all of them.

PEER. Solveig, you fair one—and to come to me?

SOL. Ay, to you alone; you must be all to me, friend and consoler. [*In tears.*] The worst was leaving my little sister;—but parting from father was worse, still worse; and worst to leave her at whose breast I was borne; —oh! no, God forgive me, the worst I must call the sorrow of leaving them all, ay all!

PEER. And you know the doom that was passed in spring? It forfeits my farm and my heritage.

SOL. Think you for heritage, goods, and gear, I forsook the paths all my dear ones tread?

PEER. And know you the compact? Outside the forest whoever may meet me may seize me at will.

SOL. I ran upon snow-shoes; I asked my way on; they said "Whither go you?" I answered, "I go home."

PEER. Away, away then with nails and planks! No need now for bars against hobgoblin-thoughts. If you dare dwell with the hunter here, I know the hut will be blessed from ill. Solveig! Let me look at you! Not too near! Only look at you! Oh, but you are bright and pure! Let me lift you! Oh, but you are fine and light! Let

me carry you, Solveig, and I'll never be tired! I will not soil you. With outstretched arms I will hold you far out from me, lovely and warm one! Oh, who would have thought I could draw you to me,—ah, but I have longed for you, daylong and nightlong. Here you may see I've been hewing and building;—it must down again, dear; it is ugly and mean—

SOL. Be it mean or brave,—here is all to my mind. One so lightly draws breath in the teeth of the wind. Down below it was airless; one felt as though choked; that was partly what drove me in fear from the dale. But here, with the fir-branches soughing o'erhead,—what a stillness and song!—I am here in my home.

PEER. And know you that surely? For all your days?

SOL. The path I have trodden leads back nevermore.

PEER. You are mine then! In! In the room let me see you! Go in! I must go to fetch fir-roots for fuel. Warm shall the fire be and bright shall it shine, you shall sit softly and never be a-cold. [*He opens the door;* SOLVEIG *goes in. He stands still for a while, then laughs aloud with joy and leaps into the air.*]

PEER. My King's daughter! Now I have found her and won her! Hei! Now the palace shall rise, deeply founded!

[*He seizes his axe and moves away; at the same moment an* OLD-LOOKING WOMAN, *in a tattered green gown, comes out from the wood; an* UGLY BRAT, *with an ale-flagon in his hand, limps after, holding on to her skirt.*]

WOMAN. Good evening, Peer Lightfoot!

PEER. What is it? Who's there?

WOMAN. Old friends of yours, Pe Gynt! My home is near by. We a neighbours.

PEER. Indeed? That is more than know.

WOMAN. Even as your hut wa builded, mine built itself too.

PEER [*going*]. I'm in haste—

WOMAN. Yes, that you are alway my lad; but I'll trudge behind you an catch you at last.

PEER. You're mistaken, good w man!

WOMAN. I was so before; I wa when you promised such mighty fir things.

PEER. I promised——? What devil own nonsense is this?

WOMAN. You've forgotten the nigh when you drank with my sire? You'v forgot—?

PEER. I've forgot what I never hav known. What's this that you prate of When last did we meet?

WOMAN. When last we met wa when first we met.

[*To* THE BRAT.] Give your fatner drink; he is thirsty, I'm sure.

PEER. Father? You're drunk, w man! Do you call him—?

WOMAN. I should think you migh well know the pig by its skin! Wh where are your eyes? Can't you s that he's lame in his shank, just as yo too are lame in your soul?

PEER. Would you have me believ —?

WOMAN. Would you wiggle awa —?

PEER. This long-legged urchin—

WOMAN. He's shot up apace.

PEER. Dare you, you troll-snou father on me—?

WOMAN. Come now, Peer Gynt, u're as rude as an ox! [*Weeping.*] it my fault if no longer I'm fair, I was when you lured me on hillside d lea? Last fall, in my labour, the end held my back, and so 'twas no nder I came out a fright. But if u would see me as fair as before, you ve only to turn yonder girl out of ors, drive her clean out of your sight d your mind;—do but this, dear my e, and I'll soon lose my snout!

PEER. Begone from me, troll-witch!

WOMAN. Ay, see if I do!

PEER. I'll split your skull open—!

WOMAN. Just try if you dare! Ho-, Peer Gynt, I've no fear of blows! sure I'll return every day of the ar. I'll set the door ajar and peep at you both. When you're sitting th your girl on the fireside bench,— en you're tender, Peer Gynt,—when 'd pet and caress her,— I'll seat my-f by you, and ask for my share. e there and I—we will take you by ns. Farewell, dear my lad, you can rry to-morrow!

PEER. You nightmare of hell!

WOMAN. By-the-bye, I forgot! You st rear your own youngster, you ht-footed scamp! Little imp, will go to your father?

BRAT [*spits at him*]. Faugh! I'll p you with my hatchet; only wait, y wait!

WOMAN [*kisses* THE BRAT]. What a d he has got on his shoulders, the r! You'll be father's living image en once you're a man!

PEER [*stamping*]. Oh, would you e as far—!

WOMAN. As we now are near?

PEER [*clenching his hands*]. And all —!

WOMAN. For nothing but thoughts and desires! It is hard on you, Peer!

PEER. It is worst for another!—Solveig, my fairest, my purest gold!

WOMAN. Oh! ay, 'tis the guiltless must smart, said the devil; his mother boxed his ears when his father was drunk! [*She trudges off into the thicket with* THE BRAT, *who throws the flagon at* PEER GYNT.]

PEER [*after a long silence*]. The Boyg said, "Go roundabout!"—so one must here.— There fell my fine palace, with crash and clatter! There's a wall around her whom I stood so near, of a sudden all's ugly—my joy has grown old.— Roundabout, lad! There's no way to be found right through all this from where you stand to her. Right through? Hm, surely there should be one. There's a text on repentance, unless I mistake. But what? What is it? I haven't the book, I've forgotten it mostly, and here there is none that can guide me aright in the pathless wood.— Repentance? And maybe 'twould take whole years, ere I fought my way through. 'Twere a meagre life, that. To shatter what's radiant, and lovely, and pure, and clinch it together in fragments and shards? You can do it with a fiddle, but not with a bell. Where you'd have the sward green, you must mind not to trample. 'Twas nought but a lie though, that witch-snout business! Now all that foulness is well out of sight.— Ay, out of sight, maybe, not out of mind. Thoughts will sneak stealthily in at my heel. Ingrid! And the three, they that danced on the heights! Will they too want to join us? With vixenish spite will they claim to be folded, like her, to my breast, to be tenderly lifted on outstretched arms? Roundabout, lad;

though my arms were as long as the root of the fir, or the pine-tree's stem, —I think even then I should hold her too near, to set her down pure and untarnished again.— I must roundabout here, then, as best I may, and see that it brings me nor gain nor loss. One must put such things from one, and try to forget.—[*Goes a few steps towards the hut, but stops again.*] Go in after this? So befouled and disgraced? Go in with that troll-rabble after me still? Speak, yet be silent; confess, yet conceal—? [*Throws away his axe.*] It's a holy-day evening. For me to keep tryst, such as now I am, would be sacrilege.

SOL. [*in the doorway*]. Are you coming?

PEER [*half aloud*]. Roundabout!

SOL. What?

PEER. You must wait. It is dark, and I've something heavy to fetch.

SOL. Wait; I will help you; the burden we'll share.

PEER. No, stay where you are! I must bear it alone.

SOL. But don't go too far, dear!

PEER. Be patient, my girl; be my way long or short—you must wait.

SOL. [*nodding to him as he goes*]. Yes, I'll wait!

[PEER GYNT *goes down the wood-path.* SOLVEIG *remains standing in the open half-door.*]

SCENE—ASE'S *room. Evening. The room is lighted by a wood fire on the open hearth. A cat is lying on a chair at the foot of the bed.*

ASE *lies in the bed, fumbling about restlessly with her hands on the coverlet.*

ASE. Oh, Lord my God, isn't he coming? The time drags so heavily on. I have no one to send with a message; and I've much, oh so much, to say. haven't a moment to lose now! quickly! Who could have forseen! C me, if I only were certain I'd not be too strict with him!

PEER [*enters*]. Good evening!

ASE. The Lord give you gladne You've come then, my boy, my dea But how dare you show face in t valley? You know your life's forf here.

PEER. Oh, life must e'en go as may go; I felt that I must look in.

ASE. Ay, now Kari is put to silen and I can depart in peace

PEER. Depart? Why, what are y saying? Where is it you think to g

ASE. Alas, Peer, the end is nearin I have but a short time left.

PEER [*writhing, and walking towa the back of the room*]. See there no I'm fleeing from trouble; I thought least *here* I'd be free—! Are yo hands and your feet a-cold, then?

ASE. Ay, Peer; all will soon be o' —When you see that my eyes are gl ing, you must close them carefully. A then you must see to my coffin; and sure it's a fine one, dear. Ah! no, the-bye—

PEER. Be quiet! There's time yet think of that.

ASE. Ay, ay. [*looks restlessly arou the room.*] Here you see the li they've left us! It's like them, just

PEER [*with a writhe*]. Aga [*Harshly.*] Well, I know it was fault. What's the use of reminding r

ASE. You! No, that accursed liqu from that all mischief came! Dear boy, you know you'd been drinki and then no one knows what he do and besides, you'd been riding the r deer; no wonder your head was turn

EER. Ay, ay; of that yarn enough
Enough of the whole affair. All
's heavy we'll let stand over till
r—some other day. [*Sits on the
of the bed.*] Now, mother, we'll
together; but only of this and that,
rget what's awry and crooked, and
hat is sharp and sore.—Why see
, the same old pussy; so she is alive
, still?

SE. She makes such a noise o'
ts now; you know what that bodes,
boy!

EER [*changing the subject*]. What
s is there here in the parish?

SE [*smiling*]. There's something
ut, they say, a girl who would fain
e uplands—

EER [*hastily*]. Mads Moen, is he
ent?

SE. They say that she hears and
ds not the old people's prayers and
's. You ought to look in and see
n;—you, Peer, might perhaps bring
—

EER. The smith, what's become of
now?

SE. Don't talk of that filthy smith.
name I would rather tell you,
name of the girl, you know—

EER. No, now we will chat together,
only of this and that,—forget
t's awry and crooked, and all that
sharp and sore. Are you thirsty?
fetch you water. Can you stretch
? The bed is short. Let me see;—
I don't believe, now, It's the bed
t I had when a boy! Do you mind,
r, how oft in the evenings you sat
my bedside here, and spread the
-coverlet o'er me, and sang many a
and lay?

ASE. Ay, mind you? And then we
yed sledges when your father was
far abroad. The coverlet served for sledge-apron, and the floor for an ice-bound fiord.

PEER. Ah, but the best of all, though,—mother, you mind that too?—the best was the fleet-foot horses—

ASE. Ay, think you that I've forgot?—It was Kari's cat that we borrowed; it sat on the log-scooped chair—

PEER. To the castle west of the moon, and the castle east of the sun, to Soria-Moria Castle the road ran both high and low. A stick that we found in the closet, for a whip-shaft you made it serve.

ASE. Right proudly I perked on the box-seat—

PEER. Ay, ay; you threw loose the reins, and kept turning round as we travelled, and asked me if I was cold. God bless bless you, ugly old mother,—you were ever a kindly soul—! What's hurting you now?

ASE. My back aches, because of the hard, bare boards.

PEER. Stretch yourself; I'll support you. There now, you're lying soft.

ASE [*uneasily*]. No, Peer, I'd be moving!

PEER. Moving?

ASE. Ay, moving; 'tis ever my wish.

PEER. Oh, nonsense Spread o'er you the bed-fur. Let me sit at your bedside here. There; now we'll shorten the evening with many a lilt and lay.

ASE. Best bring from the closet the prayer-book; I feel so uneasy of soul.

PEER. In Soria-Moria Castle the King and the Prince give a feast. On the sledge-cushions lie and rest you; I'll drive you there over the heath—

ASE. But, Peer dear, am I invited?

PEER. Ay, that we are, both of us. [*He throws a string round the back of*

the chair on which the cat is lying, takes up a stick, and seats himself at the foot of the bed.] Gee-up! Will you stir yourself, Black-boy? Mother, you're not a-cold? Ay, ay; by the pace one knows it, when Grane begins to go!

ASE. Why, Peer, what is it that's ringing—?

PEER. The glittering sledge-bells, dear!

ASE. Oh, mercy, how hollow it's rumbling!

PEER. We're just driving over a fiord.

ASE. I'm afraid! What is that I hear rushing and sighing so strange and wild?

PEER. It's the sough of the pine-trees, mother, on the heath. Do you but sit still.

ASE. There's a sparkling and gleaming afar now; whence comes all that blaze of light?

PEER. From the castle's windows and doorways. Don't you hear, they are dancing?

ASE. Yes.

PEER. Outside the door stands Saint Peter, and prays you to enter in.

ASE. Does he greet us?

PEER. He does, with honour, and pours out the sweetest wine.

ASE. Wine! Has he cakes as well, Peer?

PEER. Cakes? Ay, a heaped-up dish. And the dean's wife is getting ready your coffee and your dessert.

ASE. Oh, Christ; shall we two come together?

PEER. As freely as ever you will.

ASE. Oh, deary, Peer, what a frolic you're driving me to, poor soul!

PEER [*cracking his whip*]. Gee-up; will you stir yourself, Black-boy!

ASE. Peer, dear, you're drivi right?

PEER [*cracking his whip again*]. A broad is the way.

ASE. This journey, it makes me weak and tired.

PEER. There's the cattle rising fore us; the drive will be over soon.

ASE. I will lie back and close eyes then, and trust me to you, boy!

PEER. Come up with you, Gra my trotter! In the castle the thro is great; they bustle and swarm the gateway. Peer Gynt and his moth are here! What say you, Master Sa Peter? Shall mother not enter in? Y may search a long time, I tell y ere you find such an honest old so Myself I don't want to speak of; I turn at the castle gate. If you'll tr me, I'll take it kindly; if not, I'll off just as pleased. I have made up many flimflams as the devil at pulpit-desk, and called my old mothe hen, too, because she would cackle a crow. But her you shall honour a reverence, and make her at home deed; there comes not a soul to b her from the parishes nowadays.—H ho; here comes God the Father! Sa Peter! you're in for it now! [*In a d voice.*] "Have done with these jack- office airs, sir; Mother Ase shall en free!" [*Laughs loudly, and turns wards his mother.*] Ay, didn't I kn what would happen? Now they da to another tune! [*Uneasily.*] W what makes your eyes so glass Mother! Have you gone out of y wits—? [*Goes to the head of the be* You mustn't lie there and stare so- Speak, mother; it's I, your boy! [*Fe her forehead and hands cautious*

throws the string on the chair, says softly:] Ay, ay!—You can yourself, Grane; for even now the rney's done. [*Closes her eyes, and ds over her.*] For all of your days ank you, for beatings and lullabys! ut see, you must thank me back, — [*Presses his cheek against her th.*] There; that was the driver's .

OTTAR'S WIFE [*entering*]. What? r! Ah, then we are over the worst he sorrow and need! Dear Lord, she's sleeping soundly—or can she ?

EER. Hush; she is dead. [KARI *ps beside the body;* PEER GYNT *s up and down the room for some ; at last he stops beside the bed.*]

EER. See mother buried with our. I must try to fare forth from .

ARI. Are you faring afar?

EER. To seaward.

ARI. So far!

EER. Ay, and further still. [*He .*]

ACT IV

ENE—*On the south-west coast of occo. A palm-grove. Under an ng, on ground covered with matt- a table spread for dinner. Further in the grove hammocks are slung. he offing lies a steam-yacht, flying Norwegian and American colours. lly-boat drawn up on the beach. It wards sunset.*

ER GYNT, *a handsome middle-aged emen, in an elegant travelling- , with a gold-rimmed double eye- hanging at his waistcoat, is doing onours at the head of the table.* COTTON, MONSIEUR BALLON, HERR EBERKOPF, *and* HERR TRUMPETER-STRALE, *are seated at the table finishing dinner.*]

PEER. Drink, gentlemen! If man is made for pleasure, let him take his fill then. You know 'tis written: Lost is lost, and gone is gone—. What may I hand you?

TRUMPET. As host you're princely, Brother Gynt!

PEER. I share the honour with my cash, with cook and steward—

MR. COT. Very well; let's pledge a toast to all the four!

MONSIEUR BAL. Monsieur, you have a *gout,* a *ton,* that nowadays is seldom met with among men living *en garçon,* —a certain—what's the word—?

VON EBER. A dash, a tinge of free soul contemplation, and cosmopolitanisation, an outlook through the cloudy rifts by narrow prejudice unhemmed, a stamp of high illumination, an *Ur-Natur,* with lore of life, to crown the trilogy, united. *Nicht wahr,* Monsieur, 'twas that you meant?

MONSIEUR BAL. Yes, very possibly; not quite so loftily it sounds in French.

VON EBER. *Ei was!* That language is so stiff.— But the phenomenon's final cause if we would seek—

PEER. It's found already. The reason is that I'm unmarried. Yes, gentlemen, completely clear that matter is. What should a man be? *Himself,* is my concise reply. He should regard *himself* and *his.* But can *he, as a* sumpter-mule for others' woe and others' weal?

VON EBER. But this same in-and-for-yourself-ness, I'll answer for't, has cost you strife—

PEER. Ah! yes, indeed; in former days; but always I came off with honour. Yet one time I ran very near

to being trapped against my will. I was a brisk and handsome lad, and she to whom my heart was given, she was of royal family—

MONSIEUR BAL. Of royal—?

PEER [*carelessly*]. One of those old stocks, you know the kind—

TRUMPET [*thumping the table*]. Those noble-trolls!

PEER [*shrugging his shoulders*]. Old fossil Highnesses who make it their pride to keep plebian blots excluded from their line's escutcheon.

MR. COT. Then nothing came of the affair?

MONSIEUR BAL. The family opposed the marriage?

PEER. Far from it!

MONSIEUR BAL. Ah!

PEER [*with forbearance*]. You understand that certain circumstances made for their marrying us without delay. But, truth to tell, the whole affair was, first to last, distasteful to me. I'm finical in certain ways, and like to stand on my own feet. And when my father-in-law came out with delicately veiled demands that I should change my name and station, and undergo ennoblement, with much else that was most distasteful, not to say quite inacceptable,—why then I gracefully withdrew, point-blank declined his ultimatum—and so renounced my youthful bride. [*Drums on the table with a devout air.*] Yes, yes; there is a ruling Fate! On that we mortals may rely; and 'tis a comfortable knowledge.

MONSIEUR BAL. And so the matter ended, eh?

PEER. Oh! no, far otherwise I found it; for busy-bodies mixed themselves, with furious outcries, in the business. The juniors of the clan were worst; with seven of them I fought a du That time I never shall forget, thou I came through it all in safety. It c me blood; but that same blood atte the value of my person, and poi encouragingly towards the wise cont of Fate aforesaid.

VON EBER. Your outlook on course of life exalts you to the ra of thinker. Whilst the mere comm place empiric sees separately the se tered scenes, and to the last goes gr ing on, you in one glance can fo all things. One norm to all things apply. You point each random rule life, till one and all diverge like r from one full-orbed philosophy.— A you have never been to college?

PEER. I am, as I've already sa exclusively a self-taught man. Metho cally naught I've learned; but I h thought and speculated, and done m desultory reading. I started somew late in life, and then, you know, rather hard to plough ahead throu page on page, and take in all of eve thing. I've done my history piecemeal I never have had time for more. A as one needs in days of trial some c tainty to place one's trust in, I t religion intermittently. That way goes more smoothly down. One sho not read to swallow all, but rather what one has use for.

MR. COT. Ay, that is practical!

PEER [*lights a cigar*]. Dear frien just think of my career in gene In what case came I to the West? poor young fellow, empty-handed had to battle sore for bread; trust I often found it hard. But life, friends, ah, life is dear, and, as phrase goes, death is bitter. W Luck, you see, was kind to me;

e, too, was accommodating. I pros-
ed; and by versatility, I prospered
ter still and better. In ten years'
e I bore the name of Croesus
ngst the Charleston shippers. My
ie flew wide from port to port, and
tune sailed on board my vessels—
Mr. Cot. What did you trade in?
'eer. I did most in negro slaves
Carolina, and idol-images for
na.
Monsieur Bal. *Fi donc!*
'rumpet. The devil, Uncle Gynt!
eer. You think, no doubt, the busi-
s hovered on the outer edge of the
wable? Myself I felt the same thing
nly. It struck me even as odious.
, trust me, when you've once begun,
hard to break away again. At any
e it's no light thing, insuch a vast
le enterprise, that keeps whole
isands in employ, to break off whol-
once for all. That "once for all" I
't abide, but own, upon the other
, that I have always felt respect
what are known as consequences;
that to overstep the bounds has
somewhat daunted me. Besides, I
begun to age, was getting on to-
ds the fifties;—my hair was slowly
wing grizzled; and, though my
th was excellent, yet painfully the
ight beset me: Who knows how soon
hour may strike, the jury-verdict be
vered that parts the sheep and goats
nder? What could I do? To stop
trade with China was impossible.
lan I hit on—opened straightway
w trade with the self-same land. I
ped off idols every spring, each
mn sent forth missionaries, supply-
them with all they needed, as stock-
, Bibles, rum, and rice—
r. Cot. Yes, at a profit?

Peer. Why, of course. It prospered. Dauntlessly they toiled. For every idol that was sold they got a coolie well baptised, so that the effect was neutralised. The mission-field lay never fallow, for still the idol-propaganda the missionaries held in check.

Mr. Cot. Well, but the African commodities?

Peer. There, too, my ethics won the day. I saw the traffic was a wrong one for people of a certain age. One may drop off before one dreams of it. And then there were the thousand pitfalls laid by the philanthropic camp; besides, of course, the hostile cruisers, and all the wind-and-weather risks. All this together won the day. I thought: Now, Peter, reef your sails; see to it you amend your faults! So in the South I bought some land, and kept the last meat-importation, which chanced to be a superfine one. They throve so, grew so fat and sleek, that 'twas a joy to me, and them too. Yes, without boasting, I may say I acted as a father to them,— and found my profit in so doing. I built them schools, too, so that virtue might uniformly be maintained at a certain general *niveau,* and kept strict watch that never its thermometer should sink below it. Now, furthermore, from all this business I've beat a definite retreat;— I've sold the whole plantation, and its tale of live-stock, hide and hair. At parting, too, I served around, to big and little, gratis grog, so men and women all got drunk, and widows got their snuff as well. So that is why I trust,—provided the saying is not idle breath: Whoso does not do ill, does good,—my former errors are forgotten, and I, much more than

most, can hold my misdeeds balanced by my virtues.

VON EBER. [*clinking glasses with him*]. How strengthening it is to hear a principle thus acted out, freed from the night of theory, unshaken by the outward ferment!

PEER [*who has been drinking freely during the preceeding passages*]. We Northland men know how to carry our battle through! The key to the art of life's affairs is simply this: to keep one's ear close shut against the ingress of one dangerous viper.

MR. COT. What sort of viper, pray, dear friend?

PEER. A little one that slyly wiles you to tempt the irretrievable. [*Drinking again.*] The essence of the art of daring, the art of bravery in act, is this: To stand with choice-free foot amid the treacherous snares of life,—to know for sure that other days remain beyond the day of battle,—to know that ever in the rear a bridge for your retreat stands open. This theory has borne me on, has given my whole career its colour; and this same theory I inherit, a race-gift, from my childhood's home.

MONSIEUR BAL. You are Norwegian?

PEER. Yes, by birth; but cosmopolitan in spirit. For fortune such as I've enjoyed I have to thank America. My amply-furnished library I owe to Germany's later schools. From France, again, I get my waistcoats, my manners, and my spice of wit,—from England an industrious hand, and keen sense for my own advantage. The Jew has taught we how to wait. Some taste for *dolce far niente* I have received from Italy,—and one time, in a perilous pass, to eke the measure of my da
I had recourse to Swedish steel.

TRUMPET. [*lifting up his glass*]. A
Swedish steel—?

VON EBER. The weapon's wield
demands our homage first of all! [*Th
clink glasses and drink with him. T
wine begins to go to his head.*]

MR. COT. All this is very good
deed;—but, sir, I'm curious to kn
what with your gold you think
doing.

PEER [*smiling*]. Hm; doing? E

ALL FOUR [*coming closer*]. Yes,
us hear!

PEER. Well, first of all, I want
travel. You see, that's why I shipp
you four, to keep me company,
Gibraltar. I needed such a dancin
choir of friends around my gold-ca
altar—

VON EBER. Most witty!

MR. COT. Well, but no one hoi
his sails for nothing but the sailin
Beyond all doubt, you have a go
and that is—?

PEER. To be Emperor.

ALL FOUR. What?

PEER [*nodding*]. Emperor!

FOUR. Where?

PEER. O'er all the world.

MONSIEUR BAL. But how, friend-

PEER. By the might of gold! T
plan is not at all a new one; it's b
the soul of my career. Even as a b
I swept in dreams far o'er the eace
on a cloud. I soared with train a
golden scabbard,—and flopped down
all-fours again. But still my goal,
friends, stood fast.—There is a te
or else a saying, somewhere, I do
remember where, that if you gained
whole wide world, but lost *yours*
your gain were but a garland or

en skull. That is the text—or some-
g like it; and that remark is sober
n.

ON EBER. But what then is the
ish Self?

EER. The world behind my fore-
's arch, in force of which I'm no
else than I, no more than God's
Devil.

UMPET. I understand now where
re aiming!

ONSIEUR BAL. Thinker sublime!

ON EBER. Exalted poet!

EER [*more and more elevated*]. The
ish Self—it is the host of wishes,
tites, desires,— the Gyntish Self, it
e sea of fancies, exigencies, claims,
hat, in short, makes *my* breast
e, and whereby I, as I, exist. But
ur Lord requires the clay to con-
te him God o' the world, so I,
stand in need of gold, if I as
eror would figure.

ONSIEUR BAL. You have the gold,
gh!

EER. Not enough. Ay, maybe for
ne-days' flourish, as Emperor *a la*
e-Detmold. But I must be myself
loc, must be the Gynt of all the
et, Sir Gynt throughout, from top
e!

ONSIEUR BAL. [*enraptured*]. Pos-
the earth's most exquisite beauty!

N EBER. All century-old Johan-
rger!

UMPET. And all the blades of
les the Twelfth!

. COT. But first a profitable open-
or business—

EER. That's already found; our
ring here supplied me with it. To-
we set off northward ho! The
rs I received on board have
ght me tidings of importance—!
[*Rises with uplifted glass.*] It seems that Fortune ceaselessly aids him who has the pluck to seize it—

GUESTS. Well? Tell us—!

PEER. Greece is in revolt.

ALL FOUR [*springing up*]. What! Greece—?

PEER. The Greeks have risen in Hellas.

FOUR. Hurrah!

PEER. And Turkey's in a fix! [*Empties his glass.*]

MONSIEUR BAL. To Hellas! Glory's gate stands open! I'll help them with the sword of France!

VON EBER. And I with war-whoops —from a distance.

MR. COT. And I as well—by taking contracts!

TRUMPET. Lead on I'll find again in Bender the world-renowned spur-strap-buckles!

MONSIEUR BAL. [*falling on* PEER GYNT'S *neck*]. Forgive me, friend, that I at first misjudged you quite!

VON EBER. [*pressing his hands*]. I, stupid hound, took you for next door to a scoundrel!

MR. COT. Too strong that; only for a fool—

TRUMPET. [*trying to kiss him*]. I, Uncle, for a specimen of Yankee riff-raff's meanest spawn—! Forgive me—!

VON EBER. We've been in the dark—

PEER. What stuff is this?

VON EBER. We now see gathered in glory all the Byntish host of wishes, appetites, and desires—!

MONSIEUR BAL. [*admiringly*]. So *this* is being Monsieur Gynt!

VON EBER. [*in the same tone*]. This I call being Gynt with honour!

PEER. But tell me—?

MONS. BAL. Don't understand?

PEER. May I be hanged if I begin to!

MONSIEUR BAL. What? Are you not upon your way to join the Greeks, with ship and money—?

PEER [*contemptuously*]. No, many thanks! I side with strength, and lend my money to the Turks.

MONSIEUR BAL. Impossible!

VON EBER. Witty, but a jest!

PEER [*after a short silence, leaning on a chair and assuming a dignified mien*]. Come, gentlemen, I think it best we part before the last remains of friendship melt away like smoke. Who nothing owns will lightly risk it. When in the world one scarce commands the strip of earth one's shadow covers, one's born to serve as food for powder. But when a man stands safely landed, as I do, then his stake is greater. Go you to Hellas. I will put you ashore, and arm you gratis too. The more you eke the flames of strife, the better will it serve my purpose. Strike home for freedom and for right! Fight! storm! make hell hot for the Turks;—and gloriously end your days upon the Janissaries lances.—But I—excuse me—[*Slaps his pocket.*] I have cash, and am myself, Sir Peter Gynt. [*Puts up his sunshade, and goes into the grove, where the hammocks are partly visible.*]

TRUMPET. The swinish cur!

MONSIEUR BAL. No taste for glory —!

MR. COT. Oh, glory's neither here nor there; but think of the enormous profits we'd reap if Greece should free herself.

MONSIEUR BAL. I saw myself a conqueror, by lovely Grecian maids encircled.

TRUMPET. Grasped in my Swed hands, I saw the great, heroic sp strap-buckles!

VON EBER. I my gigantic Fath land's culture saw spread o'er ea and sea—!

MR. COT. The worst's the loss solid cash. God dam! I scarce can ke from weeping! I saw me owner Olympus. If to its fame the mo tain answers, there must be veins copper in it, that could be opened again. And furthermore, that stre Castalia, which people talk so m about, with fall on fall, at lowest re oning, must mean a thousand hor power good—!

TRUMPET. Still I will go! My Sw ish sword is worth far more th Yankee gold!

MR. COT. Perhaps; but jammed i the ranks, amid the press we'd all drowned; and then where would profit be?

MONSIEUR BAL. Accurst! So near fortune's summit, and now stopp short beside its grave!

MR. COT. [*shakes his fist towards yacht*]. That long black chest ho coffered up the nabob's golden nigg sweat—!

VON EBER. A royal notion! Qui Away! It's all up with his emp now! Hurrah!

MONSIEUR BAL. What would you

VON EBER. Seize the power! crew can easily be bought. On bo then! I annex the yacht!

MR. COT. You—what?

VON EBER. I grab the whole c cern! [*Goes down to the jolly-bo*

MR. COT. Why then self-inte commands me to grab my share. [*G after him.*]

TRUMPET. What scoundrelism!
MONSIEUR BAL. A scurvy business—
—*enfin!* [*Follows the others.*]
TRUMPET. I'll have to follow, I sup-
e,—but I protest to all the world—!
llows.]

SCENE—*Another part of the coast.*
onlight with drifting clouds. The
ht is seen far out, under full steam.
ER GYNT *comes running along the*
ch; now pinching his arms, now
ing out to sea.

PEER. A nightmare!—Delusion!—
soon be awake! She's standing to
! And at furious speed!—Mere de-
on! I'm sleeping! I'm dizzy and
nk! [*Clenches his hands.*] It's not
sible I should be going to die!
aring his hair.] A dream! I'm de-
ined it shall be a dream! Oh, hor-
! It's only too real, worse luck!
brute-beasts of friends—! Do but
r me, oh Lord! Since thou art so
e and so righteous—! Oh! judge—!
ith upstretched arms.] It is *I*, Peter
t! Oh, our Lord, give but heed!
d thy hand o'er me, Father; or else
ust perish! Make them back the
hine! Make them lower the gig!
o the robbers! Make something go
ng with the rigging! Hear me! Let
r folks' business lie over! The
ld can take care of itself for the
e!—I'm blessed if he hears me!
s deaf as his wont it! Here's a
thing! A God that is bankrupt
help! [*Beckons upwards.*] Hist!
abandoned the nigger-plantation!
missionaries I've exported to
a! Surely one good turn should be
th another! Oh, help me on
rd—!

A jet of fire shoots into the air from yacht, followed by thick clouds of smoke; a hollow report is heard. PEER GYNT *utters a shriek, and sinks down on the sands. Gradually the smoke clears away; the ship has disappeared.*]

PEER [*softly, with a pale face*]. That's the sword of wrath! In a crack to the bottom, every soul, man and mouse! Oh, for ever blest be the lucky chance——[*With emotion.*] A chance? No, no, it was more than chance. I was to be rescued and they to perish. Oh, thanks and praise for that thou hast kept me, hast cared for me, spite of all my sins!—[*Draws a deep breath.*] What a marvellous feeling of safety and peace it gives one to know oneself especially shielded! But the desert! What about food and drink? Oh, something I'm sure to find. *He'll* see to that. There's no cause for alarm;—[*Loud and insinuatingly.*] He would never allow a poor little sparrow like me to perish! Be but lowly of spirit. And give him time. Leave it all in the Lord's hands; and don't be cast down.—[*With a start of terror.*] Can that be a lion that growled in the reeds——? [*His teeth chattering.*] No, it wasn't a lion. [*Mustering up courage.*] A lion, forsooth! Those beasts, they'll take care to keep out of the way. They know it's no joke to fall foul of their betters. They have instinct to guide them; — they feel, what's a fact, that it's dangerous playing with elephants.—But all the same ——. I must find a tree. There's a grove of acacias and palms over there; if I once can climb up, I'll be sheltered and safe,—most of all if I knew but a psalm or two. [*Clambers up.*] Morning and evening are not alike; that text has been oft enough weighed and pondered. [*Seats himself comfort-*

ably.] How blissful to feel so uplifted in spirit. To think nobly is more than to know oneself rich. Only trust in Him. He knows well what share of the chalice of need I can bear to drain. He takes fatherly thought for my personal weal;—[*Casts a glance over the sea, and whispers with a sigh:*] but economical—no, that he isn't!

SCENE—*Night. An encampment of Moroccan troops on the edge of the desert. Watch-fires, with* SOLDIERS *resting by them.*

A SLAVE [*enters, tearing his hair*]. Gone is the Emperor's milk-white charger!

ANOTHER SLAVE [*enters, rending his garments*]. The Emperor's sacred robes are stolen!

AN OFFICER [*enters*]. A hundred stripes upon the foot-soles for all who fail to catch the robber! [*The troopers mount their horses, and gallop away in every direction.*]

SCENE — *Daybreak. The grove of acacias and palms.* PEER GYNT *in his tree with a broken branch in his hand, trying to beat off a swarm of monkeys.*

PEER. Confound it! A most disagreeable night. [*Laying about him.*] Are you there again? This is most accursed! Now they're throwing fruit. No, it's something else. A loathsome beast is your Barbary ape! The Scripture says: Thou shalt watch and fight. But I'm blest if I can; I am heavy and tired. [*Is again attacked; impatiently:*] I must put a stopper upon this nuisance! I must see and get hold of one of these scamps, get him hung and skinned, and then dress myself up, as best I may, in his shaggy hide, that the others may take me for one of themselves.—What are we mortals? Motes, no more; and it's wisest to follow t fashion a bit.—Again a rabble! Th throng and swarm. Off with yo Shoo! They go on as though cra If only I had a false tail to put now,—only something to make me a like a beast.—What now? There's pattering over my head——! [*Loo up.*] It's the grandfather ape,—w his fists full of filth——! [*Hudd together apprehensively, and keeps s for a while. The ape makes a motio* PEER GYNT *begins coaxing and whe ling him, as he might a dog.*] Ay,—a you there, my good old Bus! He's good beast, he is! He will listen reason! He wouldn't throw;—I shou think not, indeed! It is me! Pip-pi We are first-rate friends! Ai- Don't you hear, I can talk yo language? Bus and I, we are kinsfo you see;—Bus shall have sugar morrow——! The beast! The wh cargo on top of me! Ugh, how d gusting! — Or perhaps it was foo 'Twas in taste—indefinable; and tast for the most part a matter of hal What thinker is it who somewhere sa You must spit and trust to the force habit?—Now here come the small-f [*Hits and slashes around him.*] really too bad that man, who by rig is the lord of creation, should find h self forced to——! O! murder! m der! the old one was bad, but youngsters are worse!

SCENE — *Early morning. A st region, with a view out over the des On one side a cleft in the hill, an cave.* A THIEF *and a* RECEIVER *hid in the cleft, with the Emperor's ho and robes. The horse, richly cap isoned, is tied to a stone. Horsem are seen afar off.*

HIEF. The tongues of the lances lickering and flashing,—see, see!
ECEIVER. Already my head seems ll on the sand-plain! Woe, woe!
HIEF [*folds his arms over his st*]. My father he thieved; so his must be thieving.
ECEIVER. My father received; so son keeps receiving.
HIEF. Thy lot shalt thou bear still; elf shalt thou be still.
ECEIVER [*listening*]. Steps in the hwood! Flee, flee! But where?
HIEF. The cavern is deep, and the het great! [*They make off, leave the booty behind them. The horses gradually disappear in the dis-e.*]
EER [*enters, cutting a reed whistle*]. t a delectable morning-tide!—The -beetle's rolling his ball in the ; the snail creeps out of his dwell-ouse. The morning; ay, it has in its mouth.—It's a wonderful er, when you think of it, that Na- has given to the light of day. One so secure, and so much more ageous,—one would gladly, at need, a bull by the horns.—What a still- all round! Ah, the joys of Na- —strange enough I should never prized them before. Why go and ison oneself in a city, for no end ust to be bored by the mob.—Just how the lizards are whisking , snapping, and thinking of noth- t all. What innocence ev'n in the of the beasts! Each fulfils the or's behest unimpeachably, pre- ng its own special stamp unde- ; is itself, is itself, both in sport in strife, itself, as it was at his l: Be! [*Puts on his eye-glasses.*] d. In the middle of a sandstone block. Petrification all round him. His head alone peering. There he's sitting and gazing as though through a window at the world, and is—to himself enough.—[*Reflectively.*] Enough? To himself——? Where is it that's written? I've read it, in youth, in some so-called classic. In the family prayer-book? Or Solomon's Proverbs? Alas, I notice that, year by year, my memory for dates and for places is fading. [*Seats himself in the shade.*] Here's a cool spot to rest and to stretch out one's feet. Why, look, here are ferns growing—edible roots. [*Eats a little.*] 'Twould be fitter food for an animal;—but the text says: Bridle the natural man! Furthermore it is written: The proud shall be humbled, and whoso abaseth himself, exalted. [*Uneasily.*] Exalted? Yes, that's what will happen with me;—no other result can so much as be thought of. Fate will assist me away from this place, and arrange matters so that I get a fresh start. This is only a trial; deliverance will follow,—if only the Lord lets me keep my health. [*Dismisses his misgivings, lights a cigar, stretches himself, and gazes out over the desert.*] What an enormous, limitless waste!—Far in the distance an ostrich is striding.—What can one fancy was really God's meaning in all of this voidness and deadness? This desert, bereft of all sources of life; this burnt-up cinder, that profits no one; this patch of the world, that for ever lies fallow; this corpse, that never, since earth's creation, has brought its Maker so much as thanks,—why was it created?—How spendthrift is Nature!—Is that sea in the east there, that dazzling expanse all gleaming? It can't be; 'tis but a mir-

age. The sea's to the west; it lies piled up behind me, dammed out from the desert by a sloping ridge. [*A thought flashes through his mind.*] Dammed out? Then I could——? The ridge is narrow. Dammed out? It wants but a gap, a canal,—like a flood of life would the waters rush in through the channel, and fill the desert! Soon would the whole of yon red-hot grave spread forth, a breezy and rippling sea. The oases would rise in the midst, like islands; Atlas would tower in green cliffs on the north; sailing-ships would, like stray birds on the wing, skim to the south, on the caravan's track. Life-giving breezes would scatter the choking vapours, and dew would distil from the clouds. People would build themselves town on town, and grass would grow green round the swaying palm-trees. The southland, behind the Sahara's wall, would make a new sea-board for civilization. Steam would set Timbuctoo's factories spinning; Bornu would be colonized apace; the naturalist would pass safely through Habes in his railway-car to the Upper Nile. In the midst of my sea, on a fat oasis, I will replant the Norwegian race; the Dalesman's blood is next door to royal; Arabic crossing will do the rest. Skirting a bay, on a shelving strand, I'll build the chief city, Peeropolis. The world is decrepit! Now comes the turn of Gyntiana, my virgin land! [*Springs up.*] Had I but capital, soon 'twould be done.—A gold key to open the gate of the sea! A crusade against Death! The close-fisted old churl shall open the sack he lies brooding upon. Men rave about freedom in every land;—like the ass in the ark, I will send out a cry o'er the world, and will baptise to liberty the beautif thrall-bounden coasts that shall be. must on! To find capital, eastward west! My kingdom—well, half of say—for a horse! [*The horse in t cleft neighs.*] A horse! Ay, a robes!—Jewels too,—and a swor [*Goes closer.*] It can't be! It though——! But how? I have rea I don't quite know where, that t will can move mountains; — but h about moving a horse as well—— Pooh! Here stands the horse, that's matter of fact;—for the rest, wh *ab esse ad posse,* et cetera. [*Puts the dress and looks down at it.*] S Peter—a Turk, too, from top to to Well, one never knows what may ha pen to one.—Gee-up, now, Grane, r trusty steed! [*Mounts the horse* Gold-slipper stirrups beneath my fee —You may know the great by th riding-gear! [*Gallops off into t desert.*]

SCENE—*The tent of an Arab chi standing alone on an oasis.* PEER GYN *in his eastern dress, resting on cushio He is drinking coffee, and smoking long pipe.* ANITRA, *and a bevy* GIRLS, *dancing and singing before hi*

CHORUS. The Prophet is come! T Prophet, the Lord, the All-Knowi One, to us, to us is he come, o'er t sand-ocean riding! The Prophet, t Lord, the Unerring One, to us, to is he come, o'er the sand-ocean sailin Wake the flute and the drum! T Prophet, the Prophet is come!

ANI. His courser is white as t milk is that streams in the rivers Paradise. Bend every knee! B every head! His eyes are as brig gleaming, mild-beaming stars. N none earth-born endureth the rays

e stars in their blinding splendor! ough the desert he came. Gold and l-drops sprang forth on his breast. re he rode there was light. Be- him was darkness; behind him d drought and the simoom. He, glorious one, came! Through the rt he came, like a mortal ap- lled. Kaaba, Kaaba stands void; himself hath proclaimed it!

HORUS. Wake the flute and the n! The Prophet, the Prophet is e! [*They continue the dance, to music.*]

EER. I have read it in print—and saying is true—that no one's a het in his native land.—This posi- is very much more to my mind my life over there 'mong the leston merchants. There was thing hollow in the whole affair, thing foreign at the bottom, some- dubious behind, I was never at e in their company, nor felt myself y one of the guild. What tempted nto that galley at all? To grub grub in the bins of trade—as I it all over, I can't understand it *happened* so; that's the whole r.—To be oneself on a basis of is no better than founding one's e on the sand. For your watch, your ring, and the rest the good le fawn on you, grovelling to ; they lift their hats to your led breast-pin; but your ring and breast-pin are not your person.— ophet; ay, that is a clearer posi- At least one knows on what foot- ne stands. If you make a success, *ourself* that receives the ovation, ot your pounds-sterling and shill- One is what one is, and no nse about it; one owes nothing to chance or to accident, and needs neither licence nor patent to lean on. — A prophet; ay, that is the thing for me. And I slipped so utterly unawares into it,—just by coming galloping over the desert, and meeting these children of nature *en route*. The Prophet had come to them; so much was clear. It was really not my intent to deceive ——; there's a difference 'twixt lies and oracular answers; and then I can always withdraw again. I'm in no way bound; it's a simple matter — ; the whole thing is private, so to speak; I can go as I came; there's my horse ready saddled; I am master, in short, of the situation.

ANI. [*approaching from the tent-door*]. Prophet and Master!

PEER. What would my slave?

ANI. The sons of the desert await at thy tent-door; they pray for the light of thy countenance—

PEER. Stop! Say in the distance I'd have them assemble; say from the distance I hear all their prayers. Add that I suffer no menfolk in here! Men, my child, are a worthless crew,—inveterate rascals you well may call them! Anitra, you can't think how shamelessly they have swind——I mean they have sinned, my child!—Well, enough now of that; you may dance for me, damsels! The Prophet would banish the memories that gall him.

THE GIRLS [*dancing*]. The Prophet is good! The Prophet is grieving for the ill that the sons of the dust have wrought! The Prophet is mild; to his mildness be praises; he opens to sinners his Paradise!

PEER [*his eyes following* ANITRA *during the dance*]. Legs as nimble as drumsticks flitting. She's a d a i n t y

morsel indeed, that wench! It's true she has somewhat extravagant contours,—not quite in accord with the norms of beauty. But what is beauty? A mere convention,—a coin made current by time and place. And just the extravagant seems most attractive when one of the normal has drunk one's fill. In the law-bound one misses all intoxication. Either plump to excess or excessively lean; either parlously young or portentously old;—the medium is mawkish.—Her feet—they are not altogether clean; no more are her arms; in especial one of them. But that is at bottom no drawback at all. I should rather call it a qualification—Anitra, come listen!

ANI. [*approaching*]. Thy handmaiden hears!

PEER. You are tempting, my daughter! The Prophet is touched. If you don't believe me, then hear the proof; —I'll make you a Houri in Paradise!

ANI. Impossible, Lord!

PEER. What? You think I am jesting? I'm in sober earnest, as true as I live!

ANI. But I haven't a soul.

PEER. Then of course you must get one!

ANI. How, Lord?

PEER. Just leave *me* alone for that;—I shall look after your education. No soul? Why, truly you're not over bright, as the saying goes. I've observed it with pain. But pooh! for a soul you can always find room. Come here! let me measure your brain-pan, child.—There is room, there is room, I was sure there was. It's true you never will penetrate very deep; to a *large* soul you'll scarcely attain;—but never you mind; it won't matter bit;—you'll have plenty to carry y through with credit—

ANI. The Prophet is gracious—

PEER. You hesitate? Speak!

ANI. But I'd rather—

PEER. Say on; don't waste ti about it!

ANI. I don't care so much abo having a soul;—give me rather—

PEER. What child?

ANI. [*pointing to his turban*]. Th lovely opal!

PEER [*enchanted, handing her jewel*]. Anitra! Anitra! true daug ter of Eve! I feel thee magnetic; I am a man. And, as a much-esteem author has phrased it: "Das Ew Weibliche zieht uns hinan!"

SCENE — *A moonlight night. palm-grove outside* ANITRA'S *te* PEER GYNT *is sitting beneath a t with an Arabian lute in his hands. beard and hair are clipped; he lo considerably younger.*

PEER [*plays and sings*]. I doub locked my Paradise, and took its with me. The north-wind bore seaward ho! while lovely women forlorn wept on the ocean strand. S southward, southward clove my the salt sea-currents through. Wh palms were swaying proud and f a garland round the ocean-bight, I my ship afire. I climbed aboard desert ship, a ship on four stout l It foamed beneath the lashing whip oh, catch me; I'm a flitting bird;— twittering on a bough! Anitra, tho the palm-tree's must; that know I r full well! Ay, even the Angora g milk cheese is scarcely half such dai fare, Anitra, ah, as thou! [*He ha*

lute over his shoulder, and comes yard.] Stillness! Is the fair one ning? Has she heard my little ? Peeps she from behind the cur- , veil and so forth cast aside?— h! A sound as though a cork from ttle burst amain! Now once more! yet again! Love-sighs can it be? songs?—No, it is distinctly snor- —Dulcet strain! Anitra sleepeth! ntingale, thy warbling stay! Every of woe betide thee, if with gur- trill thou darest—but, as says ext: Let be! Nightingale, thou art nger; ah, even such an one am I. like me, ensnares with music ten- shrinking little hearts. Balmy t is made for music; music is our non sphere; in the act of singing, re we, Peer Gynt and nightingale. the maiden's very sleeping is my ion's crowning bliss;—for the lips ruded o'er the beaker yet untasted —but she's coming, I declare! r all, it's best she should.

NI. [*from the tent*]. Master, call'st in the night?

ER. Yes indeed, the Prophet calls. s wakened by the cat with a furi- unting-hubbub—

NI. Ah, not hunting-noises, Mas- it was something much, much e.

ER. What, then, was't?

NI. Oh, spare me!

ER. Speak.

NI. Oh, I blush to—

ER [*approaching*]. Was it, may- that which filled me so completely I let you have my opal?

NI. [*horrified*]. Liken thee, O 's great treasure, to a horrible old

PEER. Child, from passion's standpoint viewed, many a tom-cat and a prophet come to very much the same.

ANI. Master, jest like honey floweth from thy lips.

PEER. My little friend, you, like other maidens, judge great men by their outsides only. I am full of jest at bottom, most of all when we're alone. I am forced by my position to assume a solemn mask. Duties of the day constrain me; all the reckonings and worry that I have with one and all, make me oft a cross-grained prophet; but it's only from the tongue out.—Fudge, avaunt! *En tete-a-tete* I'm Peer—well, the man I am. Hei, away now with the prophet; me, myself, you have me here! [*Seats himself under a tree, and draws her to him.*] Come, Anitra, we will rest us underneath the palm's green fan-shade! I'll lie whispering, you'll lie smiling; afterwards our roles exchange we; then shall your lips, fresh and balmy, to my smiling, passion whisper!

ANI. [*lies down at his feet*]. All thy words are sweet as singing, though I understand but little. Master, tell me, can thy daughter catch a soul by listening?

PEER. Soul, and spirit's light and knowledge, all in good time you shall have them. When in east, on rosy streamers golden types print: Here is day,—then, my child, I'll give you lessons; you'll be well brought-up, no fear. But, 'mid night's delicious stillness, it were stupid if I should, with a threadbare wisdom's remnants, play the part of pedagogue.—And the soul, moreover is not, looked at properly, the main thing. It's the heart that really matters.

ANI. Speak, O Master! When thou speakest, I see gleams, as though of opals!

PEER. Wisdom in extremes is folly; coward blossoms into tyrant; truth, when carried to excess, ends in wisdom written backwards. Ay, my daughter, I'm forsworn as a dog if there are not folk with o'erfed souls on earth who shall scarce attain to clearness. Once I met with such a fellow, of the flock the very flower; and even he mistook his goal, losing sense in blatant sound.—See the waste round this oasis. Were I but to swing my turban, I could force the ocean-flood to fill up the whole concern. But I were a blockhead, truly, seas and land to go creating. Know you what it is to live?

ANI. Teach me!

PEER. It is to be wafted dry-shod down the stream of time, wholly, solely as oneself. Only in full manhood can I be the man I am, dear child! Aged eagle moults his plumage, aged fogey lags declining, aged dame has ne'er a tooth left, aged churl gets withered hands,—one and all get withered souls. Youth! Ah, youth! I mean to reign, as a sultan, whole and fiery,—not on Gytiana's shores, under trellised vines and palm leaves,—but enthroned in the freshness of a woman's virgin thoughts.—See you now, my little maiden, why I've graciously bewitched you,—why I have your heart selected, and established, so to speak, *there* my being's Caliphate? All your longings shall be mine. I'm an autocrat in passion! You shall live for me alone. I'll be he who shall enthral you like gold and precious stones. Should we part, then life is over,—that is, *your* life, *nota bene!* Every inch and fibre of you, will-less, without yea or na I must know filled full of me. Mi night beauties of your tresses, that's lovely to be named, shall, li Babylonian gardens, tempt your Sult to his tryst. After all, I don't co plain, then, of your empty forehea vault. With a soul, one's oft absorb in contemplation of oneself. Liste while we're on the subject,—if you li it, faith, you shall have a ring abo your ankle:—'twill be best for both us. *I* will be your soul by proxy; f the rest—why, *status quo.* [ANIT *snores.*] What! She sleeps! Th has it glided bootless past her, all I' said?—No; it marks my influence o her that she floats away in dreams my love-talk as it flows. [*Rises, a lays trinkets in her lap.*] Here a jewels! Here are more! Sleep, A tra? Dream of Peer——. Sleep! sleeping, you the crown have plac upon your Emperor's brow! Victo on his Person's basis has Peer Gynt t night achieved.

SCENE—*A caravan route. The oa is seen far off in the background.* PE GYNT *comes galloping across the des on his white horse, with* ANIRTA *bef him on his saddle-bow.*

ANI. Let be, or I'll bite you!

PEER. You little rogue!

ANI. What would you?

PEER. What would I? Play ha and dove! Run away with you! Fro and frisk a bit!

ANI. For shame An old prop like you——!

PEER. Oh, stuff! The prophet's old at all, you goose! Do you think this is a sign of age?

ANI. Let me go! I want to home!

EER. Coquette! What, home! To
er-in-law! . That would be fine!
madcap birds that have flown from
eage must never come into his sight
n. Besides, my child, in the self-
e place it's wisest never to stay too
; for familiarity lessens respect;—
of all when one comes as a pro-
or such. One should show oneself
pse-wise, and pass like a dream.
h, 'twas time that the visit should
e to an end. They're unstable of
are these sons of the desert;—both
nse and prayers dwindled off to-
ls the end.

NI. Yes, but *are* you a prophet?

EER. Your Emperor I am! [*Tries iss her.*]. Why just see now how he wee woodpecker is!

NI. Give me that ring that you on your finger.

EER. Take, sweet Anitra, the whole ne trash!

NI. Thy words are as songs! Oh, dulcet their sound!

EER. How blessed to know oneself l to this pitch! I'll dismount! your slave, I will lead your pal- ! [*Hands her his riding-whip, and ounts.*] There now, my rosebud, exquisite flower! Here I'll go ging my way through the sand, till nstroke o'ertakes me and finishes I'm young, Anitra; bear that in ! You mustn't be shocked at my ades. Frolics and high-jinks are 's sole criterion! And so, if your ect weren't so dense, you would see glance, oh my fair oleander,—your is frolicsome—*ergo,* he's young!

NI. Yes, you are young. Have any more rings?

EER. Am I not? There, grab! I eap like a buck! Were there vine-leaves around, I would garland my brow. To be sure I am young! Hei, I'm going to dance! [*Dances and sings.*] I am a blissful game-cock! Peck me, my little pullet! Hop-sa-sa! Let me trip it;—I am a blissful game-cock!

ANI. You are sweating, my prophet; I fear you will melt;—hand me that heavy bag hung at your belt.

PEER. Tender solicitude! Bear the purse ever;—hearts that can love are content without gold [*Dances and sings again.*] Young Peer Gynt is the maddest wag;—he knows not what foot he shall stand upon. Pooh, says Peer; —Pooh, never mind! Young Peer Gynt is the maddest wag!

ANI. What joy when the Prophet steps forth in the dance!

PER. Oh, bother the Prophet!—Suppose we change clothes! Heisa! Strip off!

ANI. Your caftan were too long, your girdle too wide, and your stockings too tight——

PEER. *Eh bien!* [*Kneels down.*] But vouchsafe me a vehement sorrow; —to a heart full of love, it is sweet to suffer! Listen; as soon as we're home at my castle——

ANI. In your Paradise;—have we far to ride?

PEER. Oh, a thousand miles or——

ANI. Too far!

PEER. Oh, listen;—you shall have the soul that I have promised you once——

ANI. Oh, thank you; I'll get on without the soul. But you asked for a sorrow——

PEER [*rising*]. Ay, curse me, I did! A keen one, but short,—to last two or three days!

ANI. Anitra obeyeth the prophet!—Farewell!

[*Gives him a smart cut across the fingers, and dashes off, at a tearing gallop, back across the desert.*]

PEER [*stands for a long time thunderstruck*]. Well now, may I be——!

SCENE—*The same place, an hour later.* PEER GYNT *is stripping off his Turkish costume, soberly and thoughtfully, bit by bit. Last of all, he takes his little travelling-cap out of his coat-pocket, puts it on, and stands once more in European dress.*

PEER GYNT [*throwing the turban far away from him*]. There lies the Turk, then, and here stand I!—These heathenish doings are no sort of good. It's lucky 'twas only a matter of clothes, and not, as the saying goes, bred in the bone. — What tempted me into that galley at all? It's best, in the long run, to live as a Christian, to put away peacock-like ostentation, to base all one's dealings on law and morality, to be ever oneself, and to earn at the last a speech at one's grave-side, and wreaths on one's coffin. [*Walks a few steps.*] The hussy;—she was on the very verge of turning my head clean topsy-turvy. May I be a troll if I understand what it was that dazed and bemused me so. Well; it's well that's done: had the joke been carried but one step on, I'd have looked absurd.—I have erred;—— but at least it's a consolation that my error was due to the false situation. It wasn't my personal self that fell. 'Twas in fact this prophetical way of life, so utterly lacking the salt of activity, that took its revenge in these qualms of bad taste. It's a sorry business this prophetising! One's office compels one to walk in a mist; in playing the prophet, you throw up the ga
the moment you act like a rational
ing. In *so* far I've done what the
casion demanded, in the mere fact
paying my court to that goose. I
nevertheless——[*Bursts out laughi*
Hm, to think of it now! To try
make time stop by jigging and danci
and to cope with the current by cap
ing and prancing! To thrum on
lute-strings, to fundle and sigh,
end, like a rooster,—by getting
plucked! Such conduct is truly p
phetic frenzy.—Yes, plucked!—Ph
I'm plucked clean enough indeed. W
well, I've a trifle still left in reser
I've a little in America, a little in
pocket; so I won't be quite driven
beg my bread. — And at bottom
middle condition is best. I'm no lor
a slave to my coachman and horses
haven't to fret about postchaise or b
gage; I am master, in short, of
situation.—What path should I choo
Many paths lie before me; and a
man is known from a fool by his cho
My business life is a finished chap
my love-sports, too, are a cast-off
ment. I feel no desire to live back
a crab. "Forward or back, and it's
as far; out or in, and it's just
strait,"—so I seem to have read in s
luminous work. — I'll try someth
new, then; ennoble my course; fin
goal worth the labour and money
costs. Shall I write my life with
dissimulation, — a book for guida
and imitation? Or stay——! I h
plenty of time at command;—what
as a travelling scientist, I should st
past ages and time's voracity?
sure enough; *that* is the thing for
Legends I read e'en in childhood's d
and since then I've kept up that bra

arning.—I will follow the path of human race! Like a feather I'll on the stream of history, make live again, as in a dream,—see the es battling for truth and right, as nlooker only, in safety ensconced, thinkers perish and martyrs , see empires founded and vanish ,—see world-epochs grow from trifling seeds; in short, I will off the cream of history.—I must o get hold of a volume of Becker, travel as far as I can by chronol- —It's true—my grounding's by no s thorough, and history's wheels n wheels are deceptive; but pooh; wilder the starting-point, the re- will oft be the more original.— exalting it is, now, to choose a and drive straight for it, like and steel! [*With quiet emotion.*] reak off all round one, on every the bonds that bind one to home friends,—to blow into atoms one's led wealth,—to bid one's love and ys good-night,—all simply to find rcana of truth,—[*Wiping a tear his eye.*] *that* is the test of the man of science!—I feel myself y beyond all measure. *Now* I fathomed my destiny's riddle. 'tis but persevering through thick hin! It's excusable, sure, if I hold y head, and feel my worth, as the Peer Gynt, also called Human- Emperor.—I will own the sum- of bygone days; I'll nevermore in the paths of the living. The nt is not worth so much as a shoe- all faithless and marrowless the s of men; their soul has no wings heir deeds no weight;——[*Shrugs houlders.*] and women,—ah, they worthless crew! [*Goes off.*]

SCENE—*A summer day. Far up in the North. A hut in the forest. The door, with a large wooden bar, stands open. Reindeer-horns over it. A flock of goats by the wall of the hut. A* MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN, *fair-haired and comely, sits spinning outside in the sunshine.*

WOMAN [*glances down the path, and sings.*] Maybe both the winter and spring will pass by, and the next summer too, and the whole of the year;—but thou wilt come one day, that know I full well; and I will await thee, as I promised of old. [*Calls the goats, spins, and sings again.*] God strengthen thee, whereso thou goest in the world! God gladden thee, if at his footstool thou stand! Here will I await thee till thou comest again; and if thou wait up yonder, then there we'll meet, my friend!

SCENE—*In Egypt. Daybreak.* MEMNON'S STATUE *amid the sands.* PEER GYNT *enters on foot, and looks around him for a while.*

PEER GYNT. Here I might fittingly start on my wanderings.—So now, for a change, I've become an Egyptian; but Egyptian on the basis of the Gyntish I. To Assyria next I will bend my steps. To begin right back at the world's creation would lead to nought but bewilderment. I will go round about all the Bible history; its secular traces I'll always be coming on; and to look, as the saying goes, into its seams, lies entirely outside both my plan and my powers. [*Sits upon a stone.*] Now I will rest me, and patiently wait till the statue has sung its habitual dawn-song. When breakfast is over, I'll climb up the pyramid; if I've time, I'll look through its interior afterwards.

Then I'll go round the head of the Red Sea by land; perhaps I may hit on King Potiphar's grave.—Next I'll turn Asiatic. In Babylon I'll seek for the far-renowned harlots and hanging gardens,—that's to say, the chief traces of civilisation. Then at one bound to the ramparts of Troy. From Troy there's a fareway by sea direct across to the glorious ancient Athens;—there on the spot will I, stone by stone, survey the Pass that Leonidas guarded. I will get up the works of the better philosophers, find the prison where Socrates suffered, a martyr——; oh! no, by-the-bye—there's a war there at present——! Well then, my Hellenism must even stand over. [*Looks at his watch.*] It's really too bad, such an age as it takes for the sun to rise. I am pressed for time. Well then, from Troy—it was there I left off——[*Rises and listens.*] What is that strange sort of murmur that's rushing——? [*Sunrise.*]

MEMNON'S STATUE [*sings*]. From the demigod's ashes there soar, youth-renewing, birds ever singing. Zeus the Omniscient shaped them contending. Owls of wisdom, my birds, where do they slumber? Thou must die if thou rede not the song's enigma!

PEER. How strange now,—I really fancied there came from the statue a sound. Music, this, of the Past. I heard the stone-accents now rising, now sinking. — I will register it, for the learned to ponder. [*Notes in his pocket-book.*] "The statue did sing. I heard the sound plainly, but didn't quite follow the text of the song. The whole thing, of course, was hallucination.—Nothing else of importance observed to-day." [*Proceeds on his way.*]

SCENE—*Near the village of Gizeh. The great* SPHINX *carved out of rock. In the distance the spires a minarets of Cairo.* PEER GYNT *ente he examines the* SPHINX *attentive now through his eyeglass, now throu his hallowed hand.*

PEER GYNT. Now, where in world have I met before something h forgotten that's like this hobgobli For met it I have, in the north or south. Was it a person? And, if who? That Memnon, if afterwa crossed my mind, was like the Old M of the Dovrë, so called, just as he there, stiff and stark, planted on on the stumps of pillars.—But t most curious mongrel here, this chan ling, a lion and woman in one,—does come to me, too, from a fairy-tale, from a remembrance of something re From a fairy-tale? Ho, I remem the fellow! Why, of course it's Boyg, that I smote on the skull,—t is, I dreamt it,—I lay in fever.—[*ing closer.*] The self-same eyes, the self-same lips;—not quite so lur ish; a little more cunning; but same, for the rest, in all essentials Ay, so that's it, Boyg; so you're lik lion when one sees you from beh and meets you in the day-time! you still good at riddling? Come, us try. Now we shall see if you ans as last time! [*Calls out towards* SPHINX.] Hei, Boyg, who are you

VOICE [*behind the* SPHINX]. A Sphinx, wer bist du?

PEER. What! Echo answers in G man! How strange!

VOICE. Wer bist du?

PEER. It speaks it quite fluen too! That observation is new, and own. [*Notes in his book.*] "Echo German. Dialect, Berlin." [BEGRIFF

DT *comes out from behind the* HINX.]

ERG. A man!

EER. Oh, then it was *he* that was ttering. [*Notes again.*] "Arrived he sequel at other results."

ERG. [*with all sorts of restless an-*]. Excuse me, mein Herr——! e Lebensfrage——! What brings to this place precisely to-day?

EER. A visit. I'm greeting a friend my youth.

EG. What? The Sphinx—?

EER [*nods*]. Yes, I knew him in s gone by.

EG. Famos!—And that after such ight! My temples are hammering hough they would burst! You know , man! Answer! Say on! Can tell what he is?

EER. What he is? Yes, that's enough. He's *himself.*

EG. [*with a bound*]. Ha, the rid- of life lightened forth in a flash to vision!—It's certain he is himself?

EER. Yes, he says so, at any rate.

EG. Himself! Revolution! thine r is at hand! [*Takes off his hat.*] r name, pray, mein Herr?

EER. I was christened Peer Gynt.

EG. [*in rapt admiration*]. Peer t! Allegoric! I might have fore- it.— Peer Gynt! That must ly imply: The Unknown,—the er whose coming was foretold to

EER. What, really? And now you here to meet—?

EG. Peer Gynt! Profound! Enig- c! Incisive! Each word, as it , an abysmal lesson! What are

EER [*modestly*]. I've always endeavoured to be myself. For the rest, here's my passport, you see.

BEG. Again that mysterious word at the bottom. [*Seizes him by the wrist.*] To Cairo! The Interpreters' Kaiser is found!

PEER. Kaiser?

BEG. Come on!

PEER. Am I really known—?

BEG. [*dragging him away*]. The Interpreters' Kaiser—on the basis of Self!

SCENE—*In Cairo. A large courtyard, surrounded by high walls and buildings. Barred windows; iron cages.* THREE KEEPERS *in the courtyard.* A FOURTH *comes in.*

NEWCOMER. Schafmann, say, where's the director gone?

KEEPER. He drove out this morning some time before dawn.

FIRST. I think something must have occurred to annoy him; for last night—

ANOTHER. Hush, be quiet; he's there at the door!

[BEGRIFFENFELDT *leads* PEER GYNT *in, locks the gate, and puts the key in his pocket.*]

PEER [*to himself*]. Indeed an exceedingly gifted man; almost all that he says is beyond comprehension. [*Looks around.*] So this is the Club of the Savants, eh?

BEG. Here you will find them, every man jack of them;—the group of Interpreters threescore and ten; it's been lately increased by a hundred and sixty —[*Shouts to the* KEEPERS.] Mikkel, Schlingelberg, Schafmann, Fuchs,— into the cages with you at once!

KEEPERS. We!

BEG. Who else, pray? Get in, get in! When the world twirls around,

we must twirl with it too. [*Forces them into a cage.*] He's arrived this morning, the mighty Peer;—the rest you can guess,—I need say no more.

[*Locks the cage door, and throws the key into a well.*]

PEER. But, my dear Herr Doctor and Director, pray—?

BEG. Neither one nor the other! I was before—Herr Peer, are you secret? I must ease my heart—

PEER [*with increasing uneasiness*]. What is it?

BEG. Promise you will not tremble.

PEER. I will do my best, but—

BEG. [*draws him into a corner, and whispers*]. The Absolute Reason departed this life at eleven last night.

PEER. God help me—!

BEG. Why, yes, it's extremely deplorable. And as *I'm* placed, you see, it is doubly unpleasant; for this institution has passed up to now for what it's called a madhouse.

PEER. A madhouse, ha!

BEG. Not *now,* understand!

PEER [*softly, pale with fear*]. Now I see what the place is! And the man is mad;—and there's none that knows it! [*Tries to steal away.*]

BEG. [*following him*]. However, I hope you don't misunderstand me? When I said he was dead, I was talking stuff. He's beside himself. Started clean out of his skin,—just like my compatriot Munchausen's fox.

PEER. Excuse me a moment—

BEG. [*holding him back*]. I meant like an eel;—it was not like a fox. A needle through his eye;—and he writhed on the wall—

PEER. Where can rescue be found!

BEG. A snick round his neck, and whip! out of his skin!

PEER. He's raving! He's utterly c of his wits!

BEG. Now it's patent, and can't dissimulated, that this from-himse going must have for result a compl revolution by sea and land. The p sons one hitherto reckoned as mad, y see, became normal last night at elev accordant with Reason in its new phase. And more, if the matter rightly regarded, it's patent that, the aforementioned hour, the sa folks, so called, began forthwith rave.

PEER. You mentioned the hour, s my time is but scant—

BEG. Your time, did you say? Th you jog my remembrance! [*Opens door and calls out.*] Come forth a The time that shall be is proclaim Reason is dead and gone; long l Peer Gynt!

PEER. Now, my dear good fellow-

[*The* LUNATICS *come one by o and at intervals, into the courtyar*

BEG. Good morning! Come for and hail the dawn of emancipati Your Kaiser has come to you!

PEER. Kaiser?

BEG. Of course!

PEER. But the honour's so great, entirely excessive—

BEG. Oh, do not let any false m esty sway you at an hour such as t

PEER. But at least give me time No, indeed, I'm not fit; I'm complet dumbfounded!

BEG. A man who has fathomed Sphinx's meaning! A man who's h self!

PEER. Ay, but that's just the r It's true that in everything I am r self; but here the point is, if I

your meaning, to be, so to phrase
utside oneself.

EG. Outside? No, there you are
ngely mistaken! It's here, sir, that
is oneself with vengeance; one-
and nothing whatever besides. We
full sail, as our very selves. Each
shuts himself up in a barrel
elf, in the self-fermentation he
s to the bottom,—and with the self-
he seals it hermetically, and sea-
the staves in the well of self. No
has ears for the other's woes; no
has mind for the other's ideas.
e our very selves, both in thought
tone, ourselves to the spring-
d's uttermost verge,—and so, if a
er's to fill the throne, it is clear
you are the very man.

ER. O would that the devil—!

G. Come, don't be cast down; al-
all things in nature are new at
irst. "Oneself;"—come, here you
see an example; I'll choose you
ndom the first man that comes—
a gloomy figure.] Good-day,
1! Well, my boy, wandering
d for ever with misery's impress
you?

HU. Can I help it, when the
le, race by race, dies untrans-
. [*To* Peer Gynt.] You're a
ger; will you listen?

ER [*bowing*]. Oh, by all means!

HU. Lend your ear then.—East-
far, like brow-borne garlands, lie
Malabarish seaboards. Hollanders
Portugueses compass all the land
culture. There, moreover, swarms
dwelling of the pure-bred Mala-
These have muddled up the
age, they now lord it in the count-
But in long-departed ages there
rang-outang was ruler. He, the
forests's lord and master, freely fought and snarled in freedom. As the hand of nature shaped him, just so grinned he, just so gaped he. He could shriek unreprehended; he was ruler in his kingdom.—Ah, but then the foreign yoke came, marred the forest-tongue primeval. Twice two hundred years of darkness brooded o'er the race of monkeys; and, you know, nights *so* protracted bring a people to a standstill.—Mute are now the wood-notes primal; grunts and growls are heard no longer; —if we'd utter our ideas, it must be by means of language. What constraint on all and sundry! Hollanders and Portugueses, half-caste race and Malabaris, all alike must suffer by it.—I have tried to fight the battle of our real, primal wood-speech,—tried to bring life to its carcass,—proved the people's right of shrieking,—shrieked myself, and shown the need of shrieks in poems for the people.—Scantly, though, my work is valued.—Now I think you grasp my sorrow. Thanks for lending me a hearing;—have you counsel, let me hear it!

Peer [*softly*]. It is written: Best be howling with the wolves that are about you. [*Aloud.*] Friend, if I remember rightly, there are bushes in Morocco, where orang-outangs in plenty live with neither bard nor spokesman; — their speech sounded Malabarish; — it was classical and pleasing. Why don't you, like other worthies, emigrate to serve your country?

Huhu. Thanks for lending me a hearing;—I will do as you advise me. [*With a large gesture.*] East! thou has disowned thy singer. West! thou hast orang-outstangs still! [*Goes.*]

BEG. Well, was he himself? I should rather think so. He's filled with his own affairs, simply and solely. He's himself in all that comes out of him,—himself, just because he's beside himself. Come here! Now I'll show you another one, who's no less, since last evening, accordant with Reason. [*To a* FELLAH, *with a mummy on his back.*] King Apis, how goes it, my mighty lord?

FELLAH [*wildly, to* PEER GYNT]. *Am* I King Apis?

PEER [*getting behind the* DOCTOR]. I'm sorry to say I'm not quite at home in the situation; but I certainly gather, to judge by your tone—

FELLAH. Now you too are lying.

BEG. Your Highness should state how the whole matter stands.

FELLAH. Yes, I'll tell him my tale. [*Turns to* PEER GYNT.] Do you see whom I bear on my shoulders? His name was King Apis of old. Now he goes by the title of mummy, and withal he's completely dead. All the pyramids yonder he builded, and hewed out the mighty Sphinx, and fought, as the Doctor puts it, with the Turks, both to rechts and links. And therefore the whole of Egypt exalted him as a god, and set up his image in temples, in the outward shape of a bull.—But *I* am this very King Apis, I see that as clear as day; and if you don't understand it, you shall understand it soon. King Apis, you see, was out hunting, and got off his horse awhile, and withdrew himself unattended to a part of my ancestor's land. But the field that King Apis manured has nourished *me* with its corn; and if further proofs are remanded, know, I have invisible horns. Now, isn't it most accursed that no one will own my might! By birth I ar Apis of Egypt, but a fellah in othe men's sight. Can you tell me wha course to follow?—then counsel m honestly—The problem is how to mak me resemble King Apis the Great.

PEER. Build pyramids then, you highness, and carve out a greate Sphinx, and fight, as the Doctor put it, with the Turks, both to rechts an links.

FELLAH. Ay, that is all mighty fin talking! A fellah! A hungry louse I, who scarcely can keep my hov clear even of rats and mice. Quick man,—think of something better, that' make me both great and safe, and fu ther, exactly like to King Apis that on my back!

PEER. What if your highness hange you, and then, in the lap of earth 'twixt the coffin's natural frontiers, kep still and completely dead.

FELLAH. I'll do it! My life for halter! To the gallows with hide an hair!—At first there will be some di ference, but that time will smoot away. [*Goes off and prepares to han himself.*]

BEG. There's a personality for yo Herr Peer,—a man of method—

PEER. Yes, yes; I see—; but he really hang himself! God grant grace! I'll be ill;—I can scarcely con mand my thoughts!

BEG. A state of transition; it wo last long.

PEER. Transition? To what? Wi your leave—I must go—

BEG. [*holding him.*] Are you craz

PEER. Not yet—. Crazy? Heav forbid!

[*A commotion. The Minister* Hu

N *forces his way through the* wd.]

HUSSEIN. They tell me a Kaiser has ne to-day. [*To* PEER GYNT.] It is ı?

PEER [*in desperation*]. Yes, that is ettled thing!

HUSSEIN. Good.—Then no doubt re are notes to be answered?

PEER [*tearing his hair*]. Come on! ght you are, sir;—the madder the ter!

HUSSEIN. Will you do me the hon- of taking a dip? [*Bowing deeply.*] ım a pen.

PEER [*bowing still deeper*]. Why n I am quite clearly a rubbishy ce of imperial parchment.

HUSSEIN. My story, my lord, is con- ely this: they take me for a sand- , and I am a pen.

PEER. My story, Sir Pen, is, to put riefly: I'm a blank sheet of paper t no one will write on.

HUSSEIN. No man understands in least what I'm good for; they all nt to use me for scattering sand h!

PEER. I was in a woman's keeping a er-clasped book;—it's one and the ne misprint to be either mad or e!

HUSSEIN. Just fancy, what an ex- sting life; to be a pen and never e the edge of a knife!

PEER [*with a high leap*]. Just cy, for a reindeer to leap from on ı—to fall and fall—and never feel ground beneath your hoofs!

HUSSEIN. A knife! I am blunt;— k, mend me and slit me! The ld will go to ruin if they don't ıd my point for me!

PEER. A pity for the world which, like other self-made things, was reckoned by the Lord to be so excellently good.

BEG. Here's a knife!

HUSSEIN [*seizing it*]. Ah, how I shall lick up the ink now! Oh, what rapture to cut oneself! [*Cuts his throat.*]

BEG. [*stepping aside*]. Pray do not sputter.

PEER [*in increasing terror*]. Hold him!

HUSSEIN. Ay, hold me! That is the word! Hold! Hold the pen! On the desk with the paper—! [*Falls.*] I'm outworn. The postscript—remember it, pray: He lived and he died as a fate-guided pen.

PEER [*dizzily*]. What shall I—! What am I? Thou mighty—, hold fast! I am all that thou wilt,—I'm a Turk, I'm a sinner—a hill-troll—; but help; —there was something that burst—! [*Shrieks.*] I cannot just hit on thy name at the moment;—oh, come to my aid, thou—all madmen's protector! [*Sinks down insensible.*]

BEG. [*with a wreath of straw in his hand, gives a bound and sits astride of him*]. Ha! See him in the mire enthroned;—beside himself—! To crown him now! [*Presses the wreath on* PEER GYNT'S *head, and shouts:*] Long life, long life to Selfhood's Kaiser!

SCHAFMANN [*in the cage*]. Es lebe hoch der grosse Peer!

ACT V.

SCENE—*On board a ship on the North Sea, off the Norwegian coast. Sunset. Stormy weather.* PEER GYNT, *a vigorous old man, with grizzled hair and beard, is standing aft on the poop. He is dressed half sailor-fashion, with*

a pea-jacket and long boots. His clothing is rather the worse for wear; he himself is weather-beaten, and has a somewhat harder expression. The CAPTAIN *is standing beside the steersman at the wheel. The crew are forward.*

PEER GYNT [*leans with his arms on the bulwark, and gazes towards the land*]. Look at Hallingskarv in his winter furs;—he's ruffling it, old one, in the evening glow. The Jokel, his brother, stands behind him askew; he's got his green ice-mantle still on his back. The Folgefann, now, she is mighty fine,—lying there like a maiden in spotless white. Don't you be madcaps, old boys that you are! Stand where you stand; you're but granite knobs.

CAPTAIN [*shouts forward*]. Two hands to the wheel, and the lantern aloft!

PEER. It's blowing up stiff—

CAPTAIN—for a gale to-night.

PEER. Can one see the Ronde Hills from the sea?

CAPTAIN. No, how should you? They lie at the back of the snow-fields.

PEER. Or Blaho?

CAPTAIN. No; but from up in the rigging, you've a glimpse, in clear weather, of Galdhopiggen.

PEER. Where does Harteig lie?

CAPTAIN [*pointing*]. About over there.

PEER. I thought so.

CAPTAIN. You know where you are, it appears.

PEER. When I left the country, I sailed by here; And the dregs, says the proverbs, hang in to the last. [*Spits, and gazes at the coast.*] In there, where the scaurs and the clefts lie blue,—where the valleys, li trenches, gloom narrow and black, and underneath, skirting the op fiords,—it's in places like *these* hum being abide. [*Looks at the* CAPTAIN They build far apart in this country

CAPTAIN. Ay; few are the dwellin and far between.

PEER. Shall we get in by day-breal

CAPTAIN. Thereabouts; if we do have too dirty a night altogether.

PEER. It grows thick in the west.

CAPTAIN. It does so.

PEER. Stop a bit! You might p me in mind when we make up accour —I'm inclined, as the phrase goes, do a good turn to the crew—

CAPTAIN. I thank you.

PEER. It won't be much. I have d for gold, and lost what I found;— are quite at loggerheads, Fate and You know what I've got in safe kee ing on board—that's all I have left; the rest's gone to the devil.

CAPTAIN. It's more than enou though, to make you of weight amo people at home here.

PEER. I've no relations. There's one awaiting the rich old curmudgeo —Well; that saves you, at least, a scenes on the pier!

CAPTAIN. Here comes the storm.

PEER. Well, remember then—If a of your crew are in real need, I wo look too closely after the money—

CAPTAIN. That's kind. They are m of them ill enough off; they have got their wives and their children home. With their wages alone they c scarce make ends meet; but if th come home with some cash to the go it will be a return not forgot in hurry.

PEER. What do you say? Have th

ves and children? Are they mar-
d?

CAPTAIN. Married? Ay, every man
them. But the one that is worst off
all is the cook; black famine is ever
nome in his house.

PEER. Married? They've folks that
ait them at home? Folks to be glad
en they come? Eh?

CAPTAIN. Of course, in poor peo-
's fashion.

PEER. And come they one evening,
at then?

CAPTAIN. Why, I daresay the good-
e will fetch something good for a
at—

PEER. And a light in the sconce?

CAPTAIN. Ay, ay, may be two; and
ram to their supper.

PEER. And there they sit snug!
ere's a fire on the hearth! They've
r children about them! The room's
of chatter; not one hears another
at out to an end, for the joy that
n them—!

APTAIN. It's likely enough. So it's
ly kind, as you promised just now,
elp eke things out.

EER [*thumping the bulwark*]. I'll
damned if I do! Do you think I am
l? Would you have me fork out
the sake of a parcel of other folks'
s? I've slaved much too sorely in
ing my cash! There's nobody wait-
for old Peer Gynt.

APTAIN. Well well; as you please
; your money's your own.

EER. Right! Mine it is, and no one
s. We'll reckon as soon as your
nor is down. Take my fare, in the
n, from Panama here. Then brandy
around to the crew. Nothing more.
give a dolt more, slap my jaw for
Captain.

CAPTAIN. I owe you a quittance, and not a thrashing;—but excuse me, the wind's blowing up to a gale.

[*He goes forward. It has fallen dark; lights are lit in the cabin. The sea increases. Fog and thick clouds.*]

PEER. To have a whole bevy of youngsters at home;—still to dwell in their minds as a coming delight;—to have others' thoughts follow you still on your path!—There's never a soul gives a thought to me.—Lights in the sconces! I'll put out those lights. I will hit upon something!—I'll make them all drunk;—not one of the devils shall go sober ashore. They shall all come home drunk to their children and wives! They shall curve; bang the table till it rings again,—they shall scare those that wait for them out of their wits! The goodwife shall scream and rush forth from the house,—clutch her children along! All their joy gone to ruin! [*The ship gives a heavy lurch; he staggers and keeps his balance with difficulty.*] Why, that was a buffet and no mistake. The sea's hard at labour, as though it were paid for it;—it's still itself here on the coasts of the north;—a cross sea, as wry and wrong-headed as ever—[*Listens.*] Why, what can those screams be?

LOOK-OUT [*forward*]. A wreck a-lee!

CAPTAIN [*on the main deck, shouts*]. Helm hard a-starboard! Bring her up to the wind!

MATE. Are there men on the wreck?

LOOK-OUT. I can just see three!

PEER. Quick! lower the stern boat—

CAPTAIN. She'd fill ere she floated. [*Goes forward.*]

PEER. Who can think of that now? [*To some of the crew.*] If you're men,

to the rescue! What the devil if you should get a bit of a ducking!

BOATSWAIN. It's out of the question in such a sea.

PEER. They are screaming again! There's a lull in the wind.—Cook, will you risk it? Quick! I will pay—

COOK. No, not if you offered me twenty pounds-sterling—

PEER. You hounds! You chicken-hearts! Can you forget these are men that have goodwives and children at home? There they're sitting and waiting—

BOATSWAIN. Well, patience is wholesome.

CAPTAIN. Bear away from that sea!

MATE. There the wreck turned over!

PEER. All is silent of a sudden—!

BOATSWAIN. Were they married, as you think, there are three new-baked widows even now in the world.

[*The storm increases.* PEER GYNT *moves away aft.*]

PEER. There is no faith left among men any more,—no Christianity,—well may they say it and write it;—their good deeds are few and their prayers are still fewer, and they pay no respect to the Powers above them.—In a storm like to-night's, he's a terror, the Lord is. These beasts should be careful, and think, what's the truth, that it's dangerous playing with elephants;—and yet they must openly brave his displeasure! *I* am no whit to blame; for the sacrifice I can prove I stood ready, my money in hand. But how does it profit me?—What says the proverb? A conscience at ease is a pillow of down. Oh! ay, that is all very well on dry land, but I'm blest if it matters a snuff on board ship, when a decent man's out on the seas with such riff-raff. At sea one never can be one's self; one must go with the others from deck to keel; if for boatswain and cook the hour of vengeance should strike I shall no doubt be swept to the deuce with the rest;—one's personal welfare is clean set aside;—one counts but as a sausage in slaughtering-time.—My mistake is this: I have been too meek and I've had no thanks for it after all. Were I younger, I think I would shift the saddle, and try how it answered to lord it awhile. There is time enough yet! They shall know in the parish that Peer has come sailing aloft o'er the seas! I'll get back the farmstead by fair means or foul;—I will build it anew; it shall shine like a palace. But none shall be suffered to enter the hall. They shall stand at the gateway, all twirling their caps;—they shall beg and beseech—*that* they freely may do but none gets so much as a farthing of mine. If *I've* had to howl 'neath the lashes of fate, trust me to find folks I can lash in my turn—

STRANGE PASSENGER [*stands in the darkness at* PEER GYNT'S *side, and salutes him in friendly fashion*]. Good evening!

PEER. Good evening! What—? Who are you?

PASSENGER. Your fellow-passenger at your service.

PEER. Indeed? I thought I was the only one.

PASSENGER. A mistaken impression which now is set right.

PEER. But it's singular that, for the first time to-night, I should see you—

PASSENGER. I never come out in the day-time.

PEER. Perhaps you are ill? You're as white as a sheet—

PASSENGER. No, thank you—my lth is uncommonly good.

PEER. What a raging storm!

PASSENGER. Ay, a blessed one, man!

PEER. A blessed one?

PASSENGER. The sea's running high houses. Ah, one can feel one's uth watering! Just think of the ecks that to-night will be shattered; nd think, too, what corpses will ve ashore!

PEER. Lord save us!

PASSENGER. Have ever you seen a n strangled, or hanged, — or wned?

PEER. This is going too far—!

PASSENGER. The corpses all laugh. t their laughter is forced; and the st part are found to have bitten ir tongues.

PEER. Hold off from me—!

PASSENGER. Only one question pray! we, for example, should strike on a k, and sink in the darkness—

PEER. You think there is danger?

PASSENGER. I really don't know at I ought to say. But suppose, now, loat and you go to the bottom—

PEER. Oh, rubbish—

PASSENGER. It's just a hypothesis. t when one is placed with one foot the grave, one grows soft-hearted l open-handed—

PEER [*puts his hands in his pocket*]. , money!

PASSENGER. No, no; but perhaps you uld kindly make me a gift of your ch-esteemed carcass—?

PEER. This is *too* much!

PASSENGER. No more than your y, you know! To help my research- n science—

PEER. Begone!

PASSENGER. But think, my dear sir —the advantage is yours! I'll have you laid open and brought to the light. What I specially seek is the centre of dreams,—and with critical care I'll look into your seams—

PEER. Away with you!

PASSENGER. Why, my dear sir—a drowned corpse—!

PEER. Blasphemer! You're goading the rage of the storm! I call it too bad! Here it's raining and blowing, a terrible sea on, and all sorts of signs of something that's likely to shorten our days;—And you carry on so as to make it come quicker!

PASSENGER. You're in no mood, I see, to negotiate further; but time, you know, brings with it many a change— [*Nods in a friendly fashion.*] We'll meet when you're sinking, if not before; perhaps I may then find you more in the humour. [*Goes into the cabin.*]

PEER. Unpleasant companions these scientists are! With their freethinking ways—[*To the* BOATSWAIN, *who is passing.*] Hark, a word with you, friend! That passenger? What crazy creature is he?

BOATSWAIN. I know of no passenger here but yourself.

PEER. No others? This thing's getting worse and worse. [*To the* SHIP'S BOY, *who comes out of the cabin.*] Who went down the companion just now?

BOY. The ship's dog, sir! [*Passes on.*]

LOOK-OUT [*shouts*]. Land close ahead!

PEER. Where's my box? Where's my trunk? All the baggage on deck!

BOATSWAIN. We have more to attend to!

PEER. It was nonsense, captain!

'Twas only my joke;—as sure as I'm here I will help the cook—

CAPTAIN. The jib's blown away!

MATE. And there went the foresail!

BOATSWAIN [*shrieks from forward*]. Breakers under the bow!

CAPTAIN. She will go to shivers!

[*The ship strikes. Noise and confusion.*]

SCENE—*Close under the land, among sunken rocks and surf. The ship sinks. The jolly-boat, with two men in her, is seen for a moment through the scud. A sea strikes her; she fills and upsets. A shriek is heard; then all is silent for a while. Shortly afterwards the boat appears floating bottom upwards.* PEER GYNT *comes to the surface near the boat.*

PEER. Help! Help! A boat! Help! I'll be drowned! Save me, oh! Lord—as saith the text! [*Clutches hold of the boat's keel.*]

COOK [*comes up on the other side*]. Oh, Lord God—for my children's sake, have mercy! Let me reach the land! [*Seizes hold of the keel.*]

PEER. Let go!

COOK. Let go!

PEER. I'll strike!

COOK. So'll I!

PEER. I'll crush you down with kicks and blows! Let go your hold! She won't float two!

COOK. I know it! Yield!

PEER. Yield you!

COOK. Oh, yes!

[*They fight; one of the* COOK'S *hands is disabled; he clings on with the other.*]

PEER. Off with that hand!

COOK. Oh, kind sir—spare! Think of my little ones at home!

PEER. I need my life far more than you, for I am lone and childless st

COOK. Let go! You've lived, and am young!

PEER. Quick; haste you; sink;—y drag us down.

COOK. Have mercy! Yield heaven's name! There's none to m and mourn for you—[*His hand slip he screams:*] I'm drowning!

PEER [*seizing him*]. By this wisp hair I'll hold you! say your Lor Prayer, quick!

COOK. I can't remember; all tu black—

PEER. Come, the essentials in word—!

COOK. Give us this day—!

PEER. Skip that part, Cook; yo get all *you* need, safe enough.

COOK. Give us this day—

PEER. The same old song! One s you were a cook in life— [*The Co slips from his grasp.*]

COOK [*sinking*]. Give us this d our—[*Disappears.*]

PEER. Amen, lad! to the last g you were yourself.—[*Draws himself on to the bottom of the boat.*] So l as there is life there's hope—

STRANGE PASSENGER [*catches hold the boat*]. Good morning!

PEER. Hoy!

PASSENGER. I heard you shout.— pleasant finding you again. Well? my prophecy came true!

PEER. Let go! Let go! 'Twill sca float *one!*

PASSENGER. I'm striking out with left leg. I'll float, if only with t tips my fingers rest upon this le But apropos: your body—

PEER. Hush!

PASSENGER. The rest, of course done for, clean—

EER. No more!
ASSENGER. Exactly as you please.
ence.]
EER. Well?
ASSENGER. I am silent.
EER. Satan's trick!— What now?
ASSENGER. I'm waiting.
EER [*tearing his hair*]. I'll go
!—What are you?
ASSENGER [*nods*]. Friendly.
EER. What else? Speak!
ASSENGER. What think you? Do
know none other that's like me?
EER. Do I know the devil—?
ASSENGER [*in a low voice*]. Is it
way to light a lantern for life's
t-pilgrimage through fear?
EER. Ah, come! When once the
g's cleared up, you'd seem a mes-
er of light?
ASSENGER. Friend,—have you *once*
ach half-year felt all the earnest-
of dread?
EER. Why, one's afraid when dan-
threatens;—but all your words
double meanings.
ASSENGER. Ay, have you gained but
in life the victory that is given
read?
EER [*looks at him*]. Came you to
for me a door, 'twas stupid not to
e before. What sort of sense is
e in choosing your time when seas
to devour one?
ASSENGER. Were, then, the victory
e likely beside your hearth-stone,
and quiet?
EER. Perhaps not; but your talk
oled me. How could you fancy it
kening?
ASSENGER. Where I come from,
e smiles are prized as highly as pa-
e style.
EER. All has its time; what fits the taxman, so says the text, would damn the bishop.

PASSENGER. The host whose dust inurned has slumbered treads not on week-days the cothurnus.

PEER. Avaunt thee, bugbear! Man, begone! I will not die! I *must* ashore!

PASSENGER. Oh, as for that, be reassured;—one dies not midmost of Act Five. [*Glides away.*]

PEER. Ah, there he let it out at last;—he was a sorry moralist.

SCENE—*Churchyard in a high-lying mountain parish. A funeral is going on. By the grave, the* PRIEST *and a gathering of people. The last verse of the psalm is being sung.* PEER GYNT *passes by on the road.*

PEER [*at the gate*]. Here's a countryman going the way of all flesh. God be thanked that it isn't me. [*Enters the churchyard.*]

PRIEST [*speaking beside the grave*]. Now, when the soul has gone to meet its doom, and here the dust lies, like an empty pod,—now, my dear friends, we'll speak a word or two about this dead man's pilgrimage on earth. He was not wealthy, neither was he wise, his voice was weak, his bearing was unmanly, he spoke his mind abashed and faltering, he scarce was master at his own fireside; he sidled into church, as though appealing for leave, like other men, to take his place. It was from Gudbransdale, you know, he came. When here he settled he was but a lad;—and you remember how, to the very last, he kept his right hand hidden in his pocket. That right hand in the pocket was the feature that chiefly stamped his image on the mind,—and therewithal his writhing, his abashed shrinking from notice where-

soe'er he went. But, though he still pursued a path aloof, and ever seemed a stranger in our midst, you all know what he strove so hard to hide,—the hand he muffled had four fingers only. —I well remember, many years ago, one morning; there were session held at Lunde. 'Twas war-time, and the talk in every mouth turned on the country's sufferings and its fate. I stood there watching. At the table sat the Captain, 'twixt the Bailiff and the sergeants; lad after lad was measured up and down, passed, and enrolled, and taken for a soldier. The room was full, thronged the young folks, loud the laughter rang. A name was called, and forth another stepped, one pale as snow upon the glacier's edge. They bade the youth advance; he reached the table; we saw his right hand swaddled in a clout;—he gasped, he swallowed, battling after words,—but, though the Captain urged him, found no voice. Ah! yes, at last! Then with his cheek aflame, his tongue now failing him, now stammering fast, he mumbled something of a scythe that slipped by chance, and shore his finger to the skin. Straightway a silence fell upon the room. Men bandied meaning glances; they made mouths; they stoned the boy with looks of silent scorn. He felt the hail-storm, but he saw it not. Then up the Captain stood, the grey old man; he spat, and pointed forth, and thundered "Go!" And the lad went. On both sides men fell back, till through their midst he had to run the gauntlet. He reached the door; from there he took to flight;—up, up he went,—through wood and over hillside, up through the stone-slips, rough, precipitous. He had his home up there among the mountains.—It was some s months later he came here, with mothe and betrothed, and little child. H leased some ground upon the high hi side, there where the waste lands trer away towards Lomb. He married t first moment that he could; he built house; he broke the stubborn soil; throve, as many a cultivated patch bo witness, bravely clad in waving gol At church he kept his right hand his pocket,—but sure I am at home l fingers nine toiled every bit as hard others' ten.—One spring the torre washed it all away. Their lives we spared. Ruined and stripped of a he set to work to make another clea ing; and, ere the autumn, smoke aga arose from a new, better-shelter mountain farm-house. Sheltered? Fr torrent—not from avalanche; t years, and all beneath the snow l buried. But still the avalanche cou not daunt his spirit. He dug, a raked, and carted—cleared the grou —and the next winter, ere the sno blasts came, a third time was his lit homestead reared. Three sons he h three bright and stirring boys; th must to school, and school was a away;—and they must clamber wh the hill-track failed, by narrow led through the headlong scaur. What he do? The eldest had to manage best he might, and, where the path w worst, his father cast a rope arou him to stay him;—the others on back and arms he bore. Thus he toil year by year, till they were men. N might he well have looked for sc return. In the New World, three pr perous gentlemen their school-go and their father have forgotten. was short-sighted. Out beyond the

of those most near to him he noth-
saw. To him seemed meaningless
cymbals' tinkling those words that
the heart should ring like steel. His
e, his fatherland, all things high and
ning, stood ever, to his vision, veiled
mist. But he was humble, humble,
s this man; and since that sessions-
his doom oppressed him, as surely
his cheeks were flushed with shame,
l his four fingers hidden in his
ket.—Offender 'gainst his country's
s? Ay, true! But there is one
ng that the law outshineth sure as
snow-white tent of Glittertind has
ıds, like higher rows of peaks,
ve it. No patriot was he. Both for
rch and state a fruitless tree. But
re, on the upland ridge, in the small
le where he saw his calling, *there*
was great, because he was himself.
inborn note rang true unto the
. His days were as a lute with
ed strings. And therefore, peace
with thee, silent warrior, that fought
peasant's little fight, and fell! It
ıot ours to search the heart and
ıs;—that is no task for dust, but for
ruler;—yet dare I freely, firmly,
ak my hope: he scarce stands crip-
l now before his God!

The gathering disperses. PEER
NT *remains behind, alone.*]

EER. Now *that* is what I call Chris-
ity! Nothing to seize on one's mind
leasantly.—And the topic—immov-
being oneself,—that the pastor's
ily turned upon,—is full, in its
nce, of edification. [*Looks down*
n the grave.] Was it he, I wonder,
hacked through his knuckle that
I was out hewing logs in the for-
Who knows? If I weren't stand-
here with my staff by the side of
the grave of this kinsman in spirit, I could almost believe it was I that slept, and heard in a vision my panegyric.—It's a seemly and Christianlike custom indeed this casting a so-called memorial glance in charity over the life that is ended. I shouldn't at all mind accepting my verdict at the hands of this excellent parish priest. Ah, well, I dare say I have some time left ere the gravedigger comes to invite me to stay with him;—and as Scripture has it: What's best is best,—and: Enough for the day is the evil thereof,—and further: Discount not thy funeral.—Ah, the church, after all, is the true consoler. I've hitherto scarcely appreciated it;—but now I feel clearly how blessed it is to be well assured upon sound authority: Even as thou sowest thou shalt one day reap.—One must be oneself; for oneself and one's own one must do one's best, both in great and in small things. If the luck goes against you, at least you've the honour of a life carried through in accordance with principle.—Now homewards! Though narrow and steep the path, though Fate to the end may be never so biting—still old Peer Gynt will pursue his own way, and remain what he is: poor, but virtuous ever. [*Goes out.*]

SCENE—*A hillside seamed by the dry bed of a torrent. A ruined mill-house beside the stream. The ground is torn up, and the whole place waste. Further up the hill, a large farm-house. An auction is going on in front of the farm-house. There is a great gathering of people, who are drinking, with much noise.* PEER GYNT *is sitting on a rubbish-heap beside the mill.*

PEER. Forward and back, and it's just as far; out and in, and it's just

as strait.—Time wears away and the river gnaws on. Go roundabout, the Boyg said;—and here one must.

MAN DRESSED IN MOURNING. Now there is only rubbish left over. [*Catches sight of* PEER GYNT.] Are there strangers here too? God be with you, good friend!

PEER. Well met! You have lively times here to-day. Is't a christening junket or a wedding feast?

MAN. I'd rather call it a housewarming treat;—the bride is laid in a wormy bed.

PEER. And the worms are squabbling for rags and clouts.

MAN. That's the end of the ditty; it's over and done.

PEER. All the ditties end just alike; and they're all old together; I knew 'em as a boy.

LAD OF TWENTY [*with a casting-ladle*]. Just look what a rare thing I've been buying! In this Peer Gynt cast his silver buttons.

ANOTHER. Look at mine, though! The money-bag bought for a halfpenny.

THIRD. No more, eh? Twopence for the pedlar's pack!

PEER. Peer Gynt? Who was he?

MAN. All I know is this: he was kinsman to Death and to Aslak the Smith.

MAN IN GREY. You're forgetting me, man! Are you mad or drunk?

MAN. You forget that at Hegstad was a storehouse door.

MAN IN GREY. Ay, true; but we know you were never dainty.

MAN. If only she doesn't give Death the slip—

MAN IN GREY. Come, kinsman! A dram, for our kinship's sake!

MAN. To the deuce with your ki
ship! You're maundering in drink—

MAN IN GREY. Oh, rubbish; bloo
never so thin as all that; one cann
but feel one's akin to Peer Gy
[*Goes off with him.*]

PEER [*to himself*]. One meets wi
acquaintances.

LAD [*calls after the* MAN IN MOUR
ING]. Mother that's dead will be aft
you, Aslak, if you wet your whistle.

PEER [*rises*]. The agriculturists' sa
ing seems scarce to hold here; T
deeper one harrows the better it smel

LAD [*with a bear's skin*]. Look, t
cat of the Dovre! Well, only his fe
It was he chased the trolls out
Christmas Eve.

ANOTHER [*with a reindeer-skul*
Here is the wonderful reindeer th
bore, at Gendin, Peer Gynt over ed
and scaur.

THIRD [*with a hammer, calls out*
MAN IN MOURNING]. Hei, Aslak, t
sledge-hammer, say, do you know
Was it this that you used when
devil clove the wall?

FOURTH [*empty-handed*]. Ma
Moen, here's the invisible cloak P
Gynt and Ingrid flew off through
air with.

PEER. Brandy here, boys! I f
I'm grown old;—I must put up
auction my rubbish and lumber!

LAD. What have you to sell, the

PEER. A palace I have;—it lies
the Ronde; it's solidly built.

LAD. A button is bid!

PEER. You must run to a dra
'Twere a sin and a shame to bid a
thing else.

ANOTHER. He's a jolly old boy th
[*The bystanders crowd round hi*

'EER [*shouts*]. Grane, my steed; who s?

)NE OF THE CROWD. Where's he ning?

'EER. Why, far in the west! Near sunset, my lads! Ah, that courser fly as fast, ay, as fast as Peer nt could lie.

/OICES. What more have you got?

'EER. I've both rubbish and gold! ought it with ruin; I'll sell it at ss.

AD. Put it up!

'EER. A dream of a silver-clasped k! That you can have for an old k and eye.

AD. To the devil with dreams!

'EER. Here's my Kaiserdom! I w it in the midst of you; scramble it!

AD. Is the crown given in?

'EER. Of the loveliest straw. It fit whoever first puts it on. Hei, e is more yet! An addled egg! A man's grey hair! And the Prophet's rd! All these shall be his that will w on the hillside a post that has t on it: Here lies your path!

AILIFF [*who has come up*]. You're ying on, my good man, so that ost I think your path will lead ight to the lock-up.

'EER [*hat in hand*]. Quite likely. , tell me, who was Peer Gynt?

AILIFF. Oh, nonsense—

EER. Your pardon! Most humbly I —!

AILIFF. Oh, he's said to have been abominable liar—!

'EER. A liar—?

AILIFF. Yes—all that was strong great he made believe always that had done it. But, excuse me, friend have other duties— [*Goes.*]

PEER. And where is he now, this remarkable man?

ELDERLY MAN. He fared over seas to a foreign land; it went ill with him there, as one well might foresee;—it's many a year now since he was hanged.

PEER. Hanged? Ay, ay! Why, I thought as much; our lamented Peer Gynt was himself to the last. [*Bows.*] Good-bye,—and best thanks for to-day's merry meeting. [*Goes a few steps, but stops again.*] You joyous youngsters, you comely lasses,—shall I pay my shot with a traveller's tale?

SEVERAL VOICES. Yes; do you know any?

PEER. Nothing more easy.— [*He comes nearer; a look of strangeness comes over him.*] I was gold-digging once in San Francisco. There were mountebanks swarming all over the town. One with his toes could perform on the fiddle; another could dance a Spanish halling on his knees; a third, I was told, kept on making verses while his brain-pan was having a hole bored right through it. To the mountebank-meeting came also the devil;—thought he'd try his luck with the rest of them. His talent was this: in a manner convincing, he was able to grunt like a flesh-and-blood pig. He was not recognised, yet his manners attracted. The house was well filled; expectation ran high. He stepped forth in a cloak with an ample cape to it; *man muss sich drappiren,* as the Germans say. But under the mantle—what none suspected—he'd managed to smuggle a real live pig. And now he opened the representation; the devil he pinched, and the pig gave voice. The whole thing purported to be a fantasia

on the porcine existence, both free and in bonds; and all ended up with a slaughter-house squeal—whereupon the performer bowed low and retired.— The critics discussed and appraised the affair; the tone of the whole was attacked and defended. Some fancied the vocal expression too thin, while some thought the death-shriek too carefully studied; but all were agreed as to one thing: *qua* grunt, the performance was grossly exaggerated.— Now *that,* you see, came of the devil's stupidity in not taking the measure of his public first. [*He bows and goes off. A puzzled silence comes over the crowd.*]

SCENE—*Whitsun Eve. — In the depths of the forest. To the back, in a clearing, is a hut with a pair of reindeer horns over the porch-gable.*

PEER GYNT *is creeping among the undergrowth, gathering wild onions.*

PEER. Well, this is one standpoint. Where is the next? One should try all things and choose the best. Well, I have done so,—beginning from Cæsar, and downwards as far as to Nebuchadnezzar. So I had, after all, to go through Bible history;—the old boy's had to take to his mother again. After all it is written: Of the earth art thou come.— The main thing in life is to fill one's belly. Fill it with onions? That's not much good;— I must take to cunning, and set out snares. There's water in the beck here; I shan't suffer thirst; and I count as the first 'mong the beasts after all. When my time comes to die—as most likely it will,— I shall crawl in under a wind-fallen tree; like the bear, I will heap up a leaf-mound above me, and I'll scratch in big print on the bark of the tree: Here rests Peer Gynt, that decent soul Kaiser o'er all of the other beasts,— Kaiser? [*Laughs inwardly.*] Why, yo old soothsayer-humbug! no Kaiser ar you; you are nought but an onion I'm going to peel you now, my goo Peer! You won't escape either by begg ing or howing. [*Takes an onion an pulls off layer after layer.*] There lie the outermost layer, all torn; that's th shipwrecked man on the jolly-boat' keel. Here's the passenger layer, scant and thin;—and yet in its taste there' a tang of Peer Gynt. Next underneat it the gold-digger ego; the juice is a gone—if it ever had any. This coarse grained layer with the hardened ski is the peltry-hunter by Hudson's Ba The next one looks like a crown;—ol thanks! we'll throw it away witho more ado. Here's the archæologis short but sturdy; and here is th Prophet, juicy and fresh. He stink as the Scripture has it, of lies, enoug to bring the water to an honest man eyes. This layer that rolls itself soft together is the gentleman, living in ea and good cheer. The next one seem sick. There are black streaks upon it;- black symbolises both parsons and ni gers. [*Pulls off several layers at once* What an enormous number of swat ings! Isn't the kernel soon coming light? [*Pulls the whole onion to pieces* I'm blest if it is! To the innermo centre, it's nothing but swathings each smaller and smaller.— Nature witty! [*Throws the fragments awa* The devil take brooding! If one go about thinking, one's apt to stumb Well, *I* can at any rate laugh at th danger;—for here on all fours I firmly planted. [*Scratches his hea* A queer enough business, the whole co

n! Life, as they say, plays with
ds up its sleeve; but when one
tches at them, they've disappeared,
one grips something else,—or else
hing at all. [*He has come near to
hut; he catches sight of it and
rts.*] This hut? On the heath—!
! [*Rubs his eyes.*] It seems exactly
hough I had known this same build-
before.— The reindeer-horns jutt-
above the gable!— A mermaid,
ped like a fish from the navel!—
s! there's no mermaid! But nails—
planks,—bars, too, to shut out hob-
lin thoughts!—

OL. [*singing in the hut*]. Now all is
dy for Whitsun Eve. Dearest boy
mine, far away, comest thou soon?
thy burden heavy, take time, take
e;— I will await thee; I promised
old.

'EER [*rises, quiet and deadly pale*].
e that's remembered,—and one that's
got. One that has squandered,—and
that has saved.— Oh, earnest!—and
er can the game be played o'er!
dread!—*here* was my Kaiserdom!
Hurries off along the wood path.]

CENE—*Night. A heath, with fir-
s. A forest fire has been raging;
rred tree-trunks are seen stretching
miles. White mists here and there
ging to the earth.*

'EER GYNT *comes running over the
th.*

'EER. Ashes, fog-scuds, dust wind-
ven,—here's enough for building
n! Stench and rottenness within
all a whited sepulchre. Figments,
ams, and still-born knowledge lay
pyramid's foundation; o'er them
l the work mount upwards, with
step on step of falsehood. Earnest
ned, repentance dreaded, flaunt at
the apex like a scutcheon, fill the trump of judgment with their *Petrus Gyntus Caesar fecit!* [*Listens.*] What is this, like children's weeping? Weeping, but half-way to song.— Thread-balls at my feet are rolling!— [*Kicking at them.*] Off with you! You block my path!

THREAD-BALLS [*on the ground*]. We are thoughts; thou shouldst have thought us;—feet to run on thou shouldst have given us!

PEER [*going round about*]. I have given life to *one;*— 'twas a bungled, crook-legged thing!

THREAD-BALLS. We should have soared up like clangorous voices,—and here we must trundle as grey-yarn thread-balls.

PEER [*stumbling*]. Thread-clue! You accursed scamp! Would you trip your father's heels? [*Flees.*]

WITHERED LEAVES [*flying before the wind*]. We are a watchword; thou shouldst proclaimed us! See how thy dozing has woefully riddled us. The worm has gnawed us in every crevice; we have never twined us like wreaths round fruitage.

PEER. Not in vain your birth, however;—lie but still and serve as manure.

SIGHING IN THE AIR. We are songs; thou shouldst have sung us!— a thousand times over hast thou cowed us and smothered us. Down in thy heart's pit we have lain and waited;—we were never called forth. In thy gorge be poison!

PEER. Poison *thee,* thou foolish stave! Had I time for verse and stuff? [*Attempts a short cut.*]

DEWDROPS [*dripping from the branches*]. We are tears unshed for ever. Ice-spears, sharp-wounding, we could have melted. Now the barb ran-

kles in the shaggy bosom;—the wound is closed over; our power is ended.

PEER. Thanks;—I wept in Rondecloisters,—none the less they tied the tail on!

BROKEN STRAWS. We are deeds; thou shouldst have achieved us! Doubt, the throttler, has crippled and riven us. On the Day of Judgment we'll come a-flock, and tell the story,—then woe to you!

PEER. Rascal-tricks! How dare you debit what is *negative* against me?

[*Hastens away.*]

ASE'S VOICE [*far away*]. Fie, what a post-boy! Hu, you've upset me! Snow's newly fallen here;—sadly it's smirched me.— You've driven me the wrong way. Peer, where's the castle? The Fiend has misled you with the switch from the cupboard!

PEER. Better haste away, poor fellow! With the devil's sins upon you, soon you'll faint upon the hillside;—hard enough to bear one's own sins.

[*Runs off.*]

SCENE—*Another part of the heath.*]

PEER [*sings*]. A sexton! A sexton! where are you, hounds? A song from braying precentor-mouths; around your hat-brim a mourning band;—my dead are many; I must follow their biers!

[BUTTON-MOULDER, *with a box of tools, and a large casting-ladle, comes from a side path.*]

BUTTON-MOULDER. Well met, old gaffer!

PEER. Good evening, friend.

MOULDER. The man's in a hurry. Why, where is he going?

PEER. To a grave-feast.

MOULDER. Indeed? My sight's not very good;—excuse me,—your name doesn't chance to be Peer?

PEER. Peer Gynt, as the saying is

MOULDER. That I call luck! It's precisely Peer Gynt I am sent for to night.

PEER. You're sent for? What do you want?

MOULDER. Why, see here; I'm a button-moulder. You're to go into my ladle.

PEER. And what to do there?

MOULDER. To be melted up.

PEER. To be melted?

MOULDER. Here it is, empty and scoured. Your grave is dug ready, your coffin bespoke. The worms in your body will live at their ease;—but I have orders, without delay, on Master's behalf to fetch in your soul.

PEER. It can't be! Like this, without any warning—!

MOULDER. It's an old tradition at burials and births to appoint in secret the day of the feast, with no warning at all to the guest of honour.

PEER. Ay, ay, that's true. All my brain's awhirl. You are—?

MOULDER. Why, I told you—a button-moulder.

PEER. I see! A pet child has many nicknames. So that's it, Peer; it is *there* you're to harbour! But these my good man, are most unfair proceedings! I'm sure I deserve better treatment than this;—I'm not nearly so bad as perhaps you think,—I've done a good deal of good in the world —at worst you may call me a sort of bungler,—but certainly not an exceptional sinner.

MOULDER. Why that is precisely the rub, my man; you're no sinner at all in the higher sense; that's why you're excused all the torture-pangs, and land like others, in the casting-ladle.

PEER. Give it what name you please
call it ladle or pool; spruce ale and
ipes, they are both of them beer.
aunt from me, Satan!

MOULDER. You can't be so rude as
take my foot for a horse's hoof?

PEER. On horse's hoof or on fox's
ws—be off; and be careful what
u're about!

MOULDER. My friend, you're making
reat mistake. We're both in a hurry,
d so, to save time, I'll explain the
son of the whole affair. You are,
h your own lips you told me so, no
ner on the so-called heroic scale,—
rce middling even—

PEER. Ah, now you're beginning to
k common sense—

MOULDER. Just have patience a bit
ut to call you virtuous would be
ng too far.—

PEER. Well, you know I have never
d claim to that.

MOULDER. You're nor one thing nor
her then, only so-so. A sinner of
lly grandiose style is nowadays not
be met on the highways. It wants
ch more than merely to wallow in
e; for both vigour and earnestness
to a sin.

PEER. Ay, it's very true, that re-
rk of yours; one has to lay on,
e the old berserkers.

MOULDER. You, friends, on the other
nd, took your sin lightly.

PEER. Only outwardly, friend, like a
ash of mud.

MOULDER. Ah, we'll soon be at one
v. The sulphur pool is no place for
, who but plashed in the mire.

PEER. And in consequence, friend, I
go as I came?

MOULDER. No, in consequence, friend,
ust melt you up.

PEER. What tricks are these that you've hit upon at home here, while I've been in foreign parts?

MOULDER. The custom's as old as the Snake's creation; it's designed to prevent loss of good material. You've worked at the craft—you must know that often a casting turns out, to speak plainly, mere dross; the buttons, for instance, have sometimes no loop to them. What did *you* do, then?

PEER. Flung the rubbish away.

MOULDER. Ah, yes; Jon Gynt was well known for a waster, so long as he'd aught left in wallet or purse. But Master, you see, he is thrifty, he is; and that is why he's so well-to-do. He flings nothing away as entirely worthless that can be made use of as raw material. Now, *you* were designed for a shining button on the vest of the world; but your loop gave way; so into the waste-box you needs must go, and then, as they phrase it, be merged in the mass.

PEER. You're surely not meaning to melt me up with Dick, Tom, and Harry, into something new?

MOULDER. That's just what I do mean, and nothing else. We've done it already with plenty of folks. At Kongsberg, they do just the same with money that's been current so long that its stamp's worn away.

PEER. But this is the wretchedest miserliness! My dear good friend, let me get off free;—a loopless button, a worn out farthing,—what is *that* to a man in your Master's position?

MOULDER. Oh, so long, and inasmuch as, the spirit's in one, one always has value as so much metal.

PEER. No, I say! No! With both teeth and claws I'll fight against this!

Sooner anything else!

MOULDER. But what else? Come now, be reasonable. You know you're not airy enough for heaven—

PEER. I'm not hard to content; I don't aim so high;—but I won't be deprived of one doit of my Self. Have me judged by the law in the old-fashioned way! For a certain time place me with Him of the Hoof;—say a hundred years, come the worst to the worst; that, now, is a thing that one surely can bear; for they say the torment is only moral, so it can't after all be so pyramidal. It is, as 'tis written, a mere transition; and as the fox said: One waits; there comes an hour of deliverance; one lives in seclusion, and hopes in the meantime for happier days.— But this other notion—to have to be merged, like a mote, in the carcass of some outsider,—this casting-ladle business, this Gynt-cessation,—it stirs up my innermost soul in revolt!

MOULDER. Bless me, my dear Peer, there is surely no need to get so wrought up about trifles like this. Yourself you never have been at all;—then what does it matter, your dying right out?

PEER. Have *I* not been—? I could almost laugh! Peer Gynt, then, has been something else, I suppose! No, Button-moulder, you judge in the dark. If you could but look into my very reins, you'd find only Peer there, and Peer all through,—nothing else in the world, no, nor anything more.

MOULDER. It's impossible. Here I have got my orders. Look, here it is written: Peer Gynt shalt thou summon. He has set at defiance his life's design; clap him into the ladle with other spoilt goods.

PEER. What nonsense! They mu mean some other person. Is it reall Peer? It's not Rasmus, or Jon?

MOULDER. It is many a day since melted them. So come quietly now, an don't waste my time.

PEER. I'll be damned if I do! A 'twould be a fine thing if it turne out to-morrow some one else was mean You'd better take care what you're a my good man! think of the onus you' taking upon you—

MOULDER. I have it in writing—

PEER. At least give me time!

MOULDER. What good would that d you?

PEER. I'll use it to prove that I'v been myself all the days of my life and that's the question that's in disput

MOULDER. You'll prove it? An how?

PEER. Why, by vouchers and wi nesses.

MOULDER. I'm sadly afraid Mast will not accept them.

PEER. Impossible! However, enoug for the day—! My dear man, allo me a loan of myself; I'll be back shor ly. One is born only once, and one self, as created, one fain would stic to. Come, are we agreed?

MOULDER. Very well then, so be But remember, we meet at the ne cross-roads.

[PEER GYNT *runs off*

SCENE—*A further point on t heath.*

PEER [*running hard*]. Time is mone as the scripture says. If I only kne where the cross-roads are;—they m be near and they may be far. T earth burns beneath me like red-h iron. A witness! A witness! C where shall I find one? It's almost u

akable here in the forest. The world
bungle! A wretched arrangement,
n a man must prove a right that's
patent as day!
An OLD MAN, *bent with age, with*
taff in his hand and a bag on his
k, is trudging in front of him.]
LD MAN [*stops*]. Dear, kind sir—a
e to a houseless soul!
EER. Excuse me, I've got no small
nge in my pocket—
LD MAN. Prince Peer! Oh, to
k we should meet again—!
EER. Who are you?
LD MAN. You forget the Old Man
he Ronde?
EER. Why, you're never—?
LD MAN. The King of the Dovre,
boy!
EER. The Dovre-King? Really?
Dovre-King? Speak!
LD MAN. Oh, I've come terribly
n in the world—!
EER. Ruined?
LD MAN. Ay, plundered of every
r. Here I am tramping it, starved
wolf.
EER. Hurrah! Such a witness
n't grow on the trees!
LD MAN. My Lord Prince, too, has
zled a bit since we met.
EER. My dear father-in-law, the
s gnaw and wear one.—Well, well,
ce to all private affairs,—and pray,
e all things, no family jars. I
then a sad madcap—
LD MAN. Oh! yes; oh! yes;— His
ness was young; and what won't
do then? But his Highness was
in rejecting his bride; he saved
elf thereby both worry and shame;
ince then she's utterly gone to the
—
EER. Indeed!

OLD MAN. She has led a deplorable life; and, just think,—she and Trond are now living together.

PEER. Which Trond?

OLD MAN. Of the Valfjeld.

PEER. It's he? Aha; it was he I cut out with the sæter-girls.

OLD MAN. But my grandson has flourished—grown both stout and great, and has strapping children all over the country—

PEER. Now, my dear man, spare us this flow of words;— I've something quite different troubling my mind.— I've got into rather a ticklish position, and am greatly in need of a witness or voucher;—that's how you could help me best, father-in-law, and I'll find you a trifle to drink my health with.

OLD MAN. You don't say so; can I be of use to his Highness? You'll give a character, then, in return?

PEER. Most gladly. I'm somewhat hard pressed for cash, and must cut down expenses in every direction. Now hear what's the matter. No doubt you remember that night when I came to the Ronde a-wooing—

OLD MAN. Why, of course, my Lord Prince!

PEER. Oh, no more of the Prince! But no matter. You wanted, by sheer brute force, to bias my sight, with a slit in the lens, and to change me about from Peer Gynt to a troll. What did *I* do then? I stood out against it,— swore I would stand on no feet but my own; love, power, and glory at once I renounced, and all for the sake of remaining myself. Now this fact, you see, you must swear to in Court—

OLD MAN. No, I'm blest if I can.

PEER. Why, what nonsense is this?

OLD MAN. You surely don't want to

compel me to lie? You pulled on the troll-breeches, don't you remember, and tasted the mead—

PEER. Ay, you lured me seductively; —but I flatly declined the decisive test, and *that* is the thing you must judge your man by. It's the end of the ditty that all depends on.

OLD MAN. But it ended, Peer, just in the opposite way.

PEER. What rubbish is this?

OLD MAN. When you left the Ronde, you inscribed my motto upon your 'scutcheon.

PEER. What motto?

OLD MAN. The potent and sundering word.

PEER. The word?

OLD MAN. That which severs the whole race of men from the troll-folk. *Troll! To thyself be enough!*

PEER [*falls back a step*]. *Enough!*

OLD MAN. And with nerve in your body, you've being living up to it ever since.

PEER. What, I? Peer Gynt?

OLD MAN [*weeps*]. It's ungrateful of you! You've lived as a troll, but have still kept it secret. The word I taught you has shown you the way to swing yourself up as a man of substance;—and now you must needs come and turn up your nose at me and the word you've to thank for it all.

PEER. *Enough!* A hill-troll! An egoist! This must be all rubbish; that's perfectly certain!

OLD MAN [*pulls out a bundle of old newspapers*]. I daresay you think that we've no newspapers? Wait; here I'll show you in red and black, how the *Bloksberg Post* eulogises you; and the *Heklefjeld Journal* has done the same ever since the winter you left the country.— Do you care to read them You're welcome, Peer. Here's an articl look you, signed "Stallionhoof." An here too is one: "On Troll-Nationa ism." The writer points out and lay stress on the truth that horns and tail are of little importance, so lon as one has but a strip of the hid "Our *enough*," he concludes, "gives th hall-mark of trolldom to man,"—an proceeds to cite you as an instance.

PEER. A hill-troll? I?

OLD MAN. Yes, that's perfectly clea

PEER. Might as well have staye quietly where I was? Might hav stopped in the Ronde in comfort an peace? Saved my trouble and toil an no end of shoe-leather? Peer Gynt— troll? Why it's rubbish! It's stuf Good-bye! There's a halfpenny to bu you tobacco.

OLD MAN. Nay, my good Prin Peer!

PEER. Let me go! You're mad, else doting. Off to the hospital wi you!

OLD MAN. Oh, that is exactly wh I'm in search of. But, as I told yo my grandson's offspring have becon overwhelmingly strong in the land, an they say that I only exist in bool The saw says: One's kin are unkinde of all; I've found to my cost that th saying is true. It's cruel to count mere figment and fable—

PEER. My dear man, there are othe who share the same fate.

OLD MAN. And ourselves we've Mutual Aid Society, no alms-box Penny Savings Bank;—in the Ron of course, they'd be out of place.

PEER. No, that cursed: *To thys be enough* was the word there!

OLD MAN. Oh, come now, the Prin

't complain of the word. And if could manage by hook or by crook—

PEER. My man, you have got on the ong scent entirely; I'm myself, as saying goes, fairly cleaned out—

OLD MAN. You surely can't mean His Highness a beggar?

PEER. Completely. His Highness's 's in pawn. And it's all your fault, accursed trolls! That's what comes keeping bad company.

OLD MAN. So there came my hope pling down from its perch again! od-bye! I had best struggle on to town—

PEER. What would you do there?

OLD MAN. I will go to the theatre. papers are clamouring for national nts—

PEER. Good luck on your journey; greet them from me. If I can but free, I will go the same way. A e I will write them, a mad and found one; its name shall be; "Sic sit gloria mundi."

He runs off along the road; the MAN *shouts after him.*]

CENE—*At a cross-road.*

PEER. Now comes the pinch, Peer, never before! This Dovrish *Enough* passed judgment upon you. The el's a wreck; one must float with spars. All else; not only to the lt-goods heap!

OULDER [*at the cross-roads*]. Well , Peer Gynt, have you found your her?

PEER. Have we reached the cross- ? Well, that's short work!

OULDER. I can see on your face, it were a signboard, the gist of paper before I've read it.

PEER. I got tired of the hunt;—one ht lose one's way—

MOULDER. Yes; and what does it lead to, after all?

PEER. True enough; in the wood, and by night as well—

MOULDER. There's an old man, though, trudging. Shall we call him here?

PEER. No, let him go. He is drunk, my dear fellow!

MOULDER. But perhaps he might—

PEER. Hush; no—let him be!

MOULDER. Well, shall we turn to then?

PEER. One question only: What is it, at bottom, this "being oneself"?

MOULDER. A singular question, most odd in the mouth of a man who just now—

PEER. Come, a straightforward answer.

MOULDER. To be oneself is: to slay oneself. But on you that answer is doubtless lost; and therefore we'll say: to stand forth everywhere with Master's intention displayed like a signboard.

PEER. But suppose a man never has come to know what Master meant with him?

MOULDER. He must divine it.

PEER. But how oft are divinings beside the mark,—then one's carried *ad undas* in middle career.

MOULDER. That is certain, Peer Gynt; in default of divining the cloven-hoofed gentleman finds his best hook.

PEER. This matter's excessively complicated.— See here! I no longer plead being myself;—it might not be easy to get it proven. That part of my case I must look on as lost. But just now, as I wandered alone o'er the heath, I felt my conscience-shoe pinching me; I said to myself: After all, you're a sinner—

MOULDER. You seem bent on beginning all over again—

PEER. No, very far from it; a *great* one I mean; not only in deeds, but in words and desires. I've lived a most damnable life abroad—

MOULDER. Perhaps; I must ask you to show me the schedule!

PEER. Well well, give me time; I will find out a parson, confess with all speed, and then bring you his voucher.

MOULDER. Ay, if you can bring me that, then it is clear you escape this business of the casting-ladle. But Peer, I'd my orders—

PEER. The paper is old; it dates no doubt from a long past period;—at one time I lived with disgusting slackness, went playing the prophet, and trusted in Fate. Well, may I try?

MOULDER. But—!

PEER. My dear fellow, I'm sure you can't have so much to do. Here, in this district, the air is so bracing, it adds an ell to the people's ages. Recollect what the Justedal parson wrote: "It's seldom that any one dies in this valley."

MOULDER. To the next cross-roads then; but not a step further.

PEER. A priest I must catch, if it be with the tongs. [*He starts running.*]

SCENE—*A heather-clad hillside with a path following the windings of the ridge.*

PEER. This may come in useful in many ways, said Esben as he picked up a magpie's wing. Who could have thought one's account of sins would come to one's aid on the last night of all? Well, whether or no, it's a ticklish business; a move from the frying-pan into the fire;—but then there's a proverb of well-tried validity which says that as long as there's life ther hope.

[A LEAN PERSON, *in a priest's c sock, kilted-up high, and with a bi ing-net over his shoulder, comes hur ing along the ridge.*]

PEER. Who goes there? A pri with a fowling-net! Hei, hop! I'm t spoilt child of fortune indeed! Go evening, Herr Pastor the path is bad

LEAN ONE. Ah! yes; but wh wouldn't one do for a soul?

PEER. Aha! then there's some c bound heavenwards?

LEAN ONE. No; I hope he is taki a different road.

PEER. May I walk with Herr P tor a bit of the way?

LEAN ONE. With pleasure; I'm p tial to company.

PEER. I should like to consult you

LEAN ONE. *Heraus!* Go ahead!

PEER. You see here before you good sort of man. The laws of state I have strictly observed, h made no acquaintance with fetters bolts;—but it happens at times t one misses one's footing and stumb —

LEAN ONE.. Ah! yes; that occurs the best of us.

PEER. Now these trifles you see—

LEAN ONE. Only trifles?

PEER. Yes; from sinning *en gr* have ever refrained.

LEAN ONE. Oh! then, my dear low, pray leave me in peace;— I'm the person you seem to think m You look at my fingers? What see in them?

PEER. A nail-system somewhat tremely developed.

LEAN ONE. And now? You casting a glance at my feet?

ER [*pointing*]. That's a natural
?

AN ONE. So I flatter myself.

ER [*raises his hat*]. I'd have taken
oath you were simply a parson;
I find I've the honour—. Well, best
est;—when the hall door stands
—shun the kitchen way; when the
s to be met with,—avoid the
y.

ER. Your hand! You appear to
ee from prejudice. Say on then,
friend; in what way can I serve
Now you mustn't ask me for
h or power; I couldn't supply
although I should hang for it.
can't think how slack the whole
ess is;—transactions have dwin-
most pitiably. Nothing doing in
; only now and again a stray
-

ER. The race has improved so
rkably?

AN ONE. No, just the reverse; it's
shamefully low;—the majority
n a casting-ladle.

ER. Ah! yes—I have heard that
mentioned; in fact, 'twas the
of my coming to you.

AN ONE. Speak out!

ER. If it were not too much to
I should like—

AN ONE. A harbor of refuge?

ER. You've guessed my petition
e I have asked. You tell me the
ess is going awry; so I daresay
vill not be over particular.

AN ONE. But, my dear—

ER. My demands are in no way
sive. I shouldn't insist on a
y; but treatment as friendly as
s will permit.

AN ONE. A fire in your room?

PEER. Not too much fire;—and chiefly the power of departing in safety and peace,—the right, as the phrase goes, of freely withdrawing should an opening for happier days.

LEAN ONE. My dear friend, I vow I'm sincerely distressed; but you cannot imagine how many petitions of similar purport good people send in when they're quitting the scene of their earthly activity.

PEER. But now that I think of my past career, I feel I've an absolute claim to admission—

LEAN ONE. 'Twas but trifles, you said—

PEER. In a certain sense;—but, now I remember, I've trafficked in slaves—

LEAN ONE. There are men who have trafficked in wills and souls, but who bungled it so that they failed to get in.

PEER. I've shipped Bramah-figures in plenty to China.

LEAN ONE. Mere fustian again! Why, we laugh at such things. There are people that ship off far gruesomer figures in sermons, in art, and in literature—yet have to stay out in the cold—

PEER. Ah, but then, do you know—I once went and set up as prophet!

LEAN ONE. In foreign parts? Humbug! Why, most people's *sehen ins Blaue* ends in the casting-ladle. If you've no more than that to rely upon, with the best of goodwill, I can't possibly house you.

PEER. But hear this: In a shipwreck—I clung to a boat's keel,—and it's written: A drowning man grasps at a straw,—furthermore it is written: You're nearest yourself,—so I half-way divested a cook of his life.

LEAN ONE. It were all one to me

if a kitchen-maid you had half-way divested of something else. What sort of stuff is this half-way jargon, saving your presence? Who, think you, would care to throw away dearly-bought fuel in times like these on such spiritless rubbish as this? There now, don't be enraged; 'twas your sins that I scoffed at; and excuse my speaking my mind so bluntly.— Come, my dearest friend, banish this stuff from your head, and get used to the thought of the casting-ladle. What would you gain if I lodged you and boarded you? Consider: I know you're a sensible man. Well, you'd keep your memory; that's so far true;—but the retrospect o'er recollection's domain would be, both for heart and for intellect, what the Swedes call "Mighty poor sport" indeed. You have nothing either to howl or to smite about, no cause for rejoicing nor yet for despair, nothing to make you feel hot or cold; only a sort of a something to fret over.

PEER. It is written: It's never so easy to know where the shoe is tight that one isn't wearing.

LEAN ONE. Very true; I have—praise be to so-and-so!—no occasion for more than a single odd shoe. But it's lucky we happened to speak of shoes; it reminds me that I must be hurrying on;— I'm after a roast that I hope will prove fat; so I really mustn't stand gossiping here.

PEER. And may one inquire, then, what sort of sin-diet the man has been fattened on?

LEAN ONE. I understand he has been himself both by night and by day, and that, after all, is the principal point.

PEER. Himself? Then do such folks belong to your parish?

LEAN ONE. That depends; the do at least, stands ajar for them. Reme ber, in two ways a man can be hi self—there's a right and wrong side the jacket. You know they have lat discovered in Paris a way to take p traits by help of the sun. One either produce a straightforward p ture, or else what is known as a neg tive one. In the latter the lights a the shades are reversed, and they're to seem ugly to commonplace eyes; for all that the likeness is latent them, and all you require is to bri it out. If, then, a soul shall have p tured itself in the course of its life the negative method, the plate is therefore entirely cashiered,—but wi out more ado they consign it to I take it in hand, then, for furt treatment, and by suitable methods fect its development. I steam it, I it, I burn it, I scour it, with sulp and other ingredients like that, till image appears which the plate was signed for,—that, namely, which p ple call positive. But if one, like *y* has smudged himself out, neither s phur nor potash avails in the least.

PEER. I see; one must come to black as a raven to turn out a wh ptarmigan? Pray what's the name scribed 'neath the negative counter that you're now to transfer to positive side?

LEAN ONE. The name's Peter Gy

PEER. Peter Gynt? Indeed? Is H Gynt himself?

LEAN ONE. Yes, he vows he is.

PEER. Well, he's one to be trus that same Herr Peter.

LEAN ONE. You know him, haps?

EER. Oh yes, after a fashion;—
knows all sorts of people.
EAN ONE. I'm pressed for time;
re saw you him last?
EER. It was down at the Cape.
EAN ONE. Di Buona Speranza?
EER. Just so; but he sails very
tly again, if I'm not mistaken.
EAN ONE. I must hurry off then
out delay. I only hope I may catch
in time! That Cape of Good
e—I could never abide it;—it's
ed by missionaries from Stavanger.
[*He rushes off southwards.*]
EER. The stupid hound! There he
s to his heels with his tongue loll-
out. He'll be finely sold. It de-
ts me to humbug an ass like that.
to give himself airs, and to lord
rsooth! He's a mighty lot, truly,
wagger about! He'll scarcely grow
at his present trade;—he'll soon
from his perch with his whole
aratus.— Hm, *I'm* not over-safe in
saddle either; I'm expelled, one
say, from self-owning nobility.
shooting star is seen, he nods after
Bear all hail from Peer Gynt,
ther Starry-Flash! To flash forth,
o out, and be naught at a gulp—
lls himself together as though in
r, and goes deeper in among the
s; stillness for awhile; then he
:] Is their no one, no one in all
turmoil,—in the void no one, no
in heaven—! [*He comes forward*
n further down, throws his hat up-
he ground, and tears at his hair.
legrees a stillness comes over him.]
nspeakably poor, then, a soul can
ack to nothingness, into the grey
he mist. Thou beautiful earth, be
angry with me that I trampled
grasses to no avail. Thou beautiful
sun, thou hast squandered away thy glory of light in an empty hut. There was no one within it to hearten and warm;—the owner, they tell me, was never at home. Beautiful sun and beautiful earth, you were foolish to bear and give light to my mother. The spirit is niggard and nature lavish; and dearly one pays for one's birth with one's life.— I will clamber up high, to the dizziest peak; I will look once more on the rising sun, gaze till I'm tired o'er the promised land; then try to get snowdrifts piled over me. They can write above then: "Here *No One* lies buried;" and afterwards,—then—! Let things go as they can.

CHURCH-GOERS [*singing on the forest path*]. Oh, morning thrice blessed, when the tongues of God's kingdom struck the earth like to flaming steel! from the earth to His dwelling now the heirs' song ascendeth in the tongue of the kingdom of God.

PEER [*crouches as in terror*]. Never look there! *there* all's desert and waste. — I fear I was dead long before I died. [*Tries to slink in among the bushes, but comes upon the cross-roads.*]

MOULDER. Good morning, Peer Gynt! Where's the list of your sins?

PEER. Do you think that I haven't been whistling and shouting as hard as I could?

MOULDER. And met no one at all?

PEER. Not a soul but a tramping photographer.

MOULDER. Well, the respite is over.

PEER. Ay, everything's over. The owl smells the daylight. Just list to the hooting!

MOULDER. It's the matin-bell ringing—

PEER [*pointing*]. What's that shining yonder?

MOULDER. Only light from a hut.

PEER. And that wailing sound—?

MOULDER. But a woman singing.

PEER. Ay, there—there I'll find the list of my sins—

MOULDER [*seizing him*]. Set your house in order!

[*They have come out of the underwood, and are standing near the hut. Day is dawning.*]

PEER. Set my house in order? It's there! Away! Get you gone! Though your ladle were huge as a coffin, it were too small, I tell you, for me and my sins!

MOULDER. Well, to the third cross-road, Peer; but then—! [*Turns aside and goes.*]

PEER [*approaches the hut*]. Forward and back, and it's just as far. Out and in, and it's just as strait. [*Stops.*] No!—like a wild, an unending lament, is the thought: to come back, to go in, to go home. [*Takes a few steps on, but stops again.*] Round about, said the Boyg! [*Hears singing in the hut.*] Ah! no; this time at least right through, though the path may be never so strait!

[*He runs towards the hut; at the same moment* SOLVEIG *appears in the doorway, dressed for church, with a psalm-book wrapped in a kerchief, and a staff in her hand. She stands there erect and mild.*]

PEER [*flings himself down on the threshold*]. Hast thou doom for a sinner, then speak it forth!

SOL. He is here! He is here! Oh, to God be the praise! [*Stretches out her arms as though groping for him.*]

PEER. Cry out all my sins and
trespasses!

SOL. In nought hast thou sinn
oh! my own only boy. [*Gropes for h
again, and finds him.*]

MOULDER [*behind the house*]. T
sin-list, Peer Gynt?

PEER. Cry aloud my crime!

SOL. [*sits down beside him*]. Th
hast made all my life as a beauti
song. Blessed be thou that at last th
hast come! Blessed, thrice blessed
Whitsun-morn meeting!

PEER. Then I am lost!

SOL. There is one that rules
things.

PEER [*laughs*]. Lost! Unless th
canst answer riddles.

SOL. Tell me them.

PEER. Tell them! Come on! To
sure! Canst thou tell where Peer G
has been since we parted?

SOL. Been?

PEER. With his destiny's seal on
brow; been, as in God's thought
first sprang forth! Canst thou tell n
If not, I must get me home,—go do
to the mist-shrouded regions.

SOL. [*smiling*]. Oh, that riddle is ea

PEER. Then tell what thou knowe
Where was I, as myself, as the wh
man, the true man? where was I, w
God's sigil upon my brow?

SOL. In my faith, in my hope,
in my love.

PEER [*starts back*]. What say
thou—? Peace! These are juggl
words. Thou art mother thyself to
man that's there.

SOL. Ay, that I am; but who is
father? Surely he that forgives at
mother's prayer.

PEER [*a light shines in his face;
cries:*] My mother; my wife; oh, t

cent woman!—in thy love—oh, hide me, hide me!

lings to her and hides his face in ap. A long silence. The sun rises.]

OL. [*sings softly*]. Sleep thou, est boy of mine! I will cradle I will watch thee— The boy has sitting on his mother's lap. They have been playing all the life-day The boy has been resting at his ier's breast all the life-day long. s blessing on my joy! The boy has been lying close in to my heart all the life-day long. He is weary now. Sleep thou, dearest boy of mine! I will cradle thee, I will watch thee.

MOULDER'S VOICE [*behind the house*]. We'll meet at the last cross-road again, Peer; and *then* we'll see whether—; I say no more.

SOL. [*sings louder in the full daylight*]. I will cradle thee, I will watch thee; Sleep and dream thou, dear my boy!

VOLUME XI

Brand

THE PERSONS OF THE PLAY.

ÁND, *a parson.*
S MOTHER.
ÁSANT AND SON.
NAR, *an artist.*
NES, *his bride.*
RD. *a gipsy girl.*
E BAILLIE.
E CLERK.
ÁSANTS.
E DOCTOR.
E SCHOOLMASTER.
E PROVOST.
ERGY.

e action takes place mainly in the sonage of a horse fjord town.

ACT I

CENE—*Up among the snow in the ls of the fells. The mist lies thick heavy; it is raining and nearly k.*

RAND, *dressed in black, with a staff wallet, is creeping on westward.* PEASANT *and a lad, his* SON, *who e joined company with him, are a e behind.*

EASANT—[*Calling after* BRAND.] you young man, don't go so quick! ere are you?

RAND. Here!

EASANT. You're losing your way! fog is getting so thick, one can cely see the end of one's staff.

ON. Father, here are cracks!

PEASANT. Here are gaps!

BRAND. And we have lost every trace of the road.

PEASANT. [*Screaming out.*] Stop, man! God have mercy on us! The brae is as thin as a crust here! Don't stamp in the snow.

BRAND. [*Listening.*] I can hear the roar of a waterfall.

PEASANT. A stream has hollowed out a channel under us; we are standing over a gulf, no one knows how deep: it'ld swallow us up, and you too!

BRAND. On I *must,* as I said before.

PEASANT. That's more than a man can. Look here;—this ground is undermined and crumbling. Stop, man! It's a matter of life and death.

BRAND. I *must* go on; I am on a message for someone great.

PEASANT. What's his name?

BRAND. His name is God.

PEASANT. And what might you be?

BRAND. A Parson.

PEASANT. That's all very well; but I know this, if you were a Provost, or even a Bishop, you'ld be in the clutches of Death before day dawns, if you will go on, along that overhanging edge of the brae [*approaching him warily and persuasively*]. Listen to me, Parson; a man may be clever and learned, but he can't do what's too hard for him. Turn back, don't be so headstrong and stiff-necked! A man has only got his one life; when that's gone what has he got left? It's six miles to the next

homestead, and the fog's so thick you could cut it with your knife.

BRAND. If the fog is thick, then we can't be beguiled into the wrong track by the blue light.

PEASANT. But there are ice-tarns round here, and those ice-tarns are nasty things.

BRAND. We can walk across them.

PEASANT. Walk on the water? You won't perform all you promise.

BRAND. *Someone* proved, if a man has sound faith he can pass over dry-shod.

PEASANT. Ah, yes! but before our time. In our days he'll go to the bottom, body and bones.

BRAND. Farewell! [*He is going.*]

PEASANT. You're risking your life.

BRAND. If the Lord has need of my death, then welcome flood and fall and gully.

PEASANT. [*In a low voice.*] H'm, he's a wild, crack-brained chap.

SON. [*Whimpering.*] Father, let us turn back; there are signs of worse rain and storm.

BRAND. [*Stopping and coming near to them again.*] Listen, Peasant: you said that your daughter, who lives by the fjord, sent word that she was near her death, and could not quit this world wih a saving hope until she has seen you.

PEASANT. God bless me, why, that's true enough!

BRAND. And she gave you until to-day?

PEASANT. Yes.

BRAND. And no longer.

PEASANT. No.

BRAND. Then come!

PEASANT. It's a thing that can't be done. Turn back.

BRAND. [*Looking hard at him.* Listen! Would you give a hundre daler if only she might die happy?

PEASANT. Yes, Parson.

BRAND. Two hundred?

PEASANT. I would willingly sig away my house and home if she coul find her end in peace!

BRAND. But would you give you *life* too?

PEASANT. What! my life? But, m dear, good—

BRAND. Well?

PEASANT. [*Scratching himself be hind the ear.*] No, but there's a limi —! By Jesus, you mustn't forget tha I have a wife and children at home.

BRAND. He Whom you name had mother.

PEASANT. Yes, but that was a lon time ago; a great many wonderfu things happened then that don't com off in these days.

BRAND. Go home. Your life is th path of death. You know not God, an God knows not you.

PEASANT. Ugh! you're a hard man

SON. [*Pulling him.*] Do com away!

PEASANT. I'm coming, but he mus come too!

BRAND. Must I?

PEASANT. Yes; if you get lost her in this awful raging weather, and i gets noised abroad that we starte from home in company—and that w can't conceal—some fine day I shall b taken off to the court—and if you g drowned in a meer or tarn, I shall ge condemned to handcuffs and the lock up—

BRAND. Then you would suffer i the Lord's business.

PEASANT. I have nothing to do wit

is or yours; I've got more than ough of my own. Now come!

BRAND. Farewell. [*A hollow roar is ard in the distance.*]

SON. [*Screaming.*] There goes a de!

BRAND. [*To the* PEASANT, *who has ized him by the collar.*] Leave go!

PEASANT. I won't.

BRAND. Leave go at once!

SON. Come with us!

PEASANT. [*Wrestling with* BRAND.] evil take me if—!

BRAND. [*Breaking away, and throwg him down in the snow.*] That he ll, you may be quite sure of *that.* e'll get you at last! [*He goes off.*]

PEASANT. [*Sitting rubbing his m.*] Ugh, he's a strong, stubborn llow. *That's* what he calls the Lord's ork!]*As he gets up he calls out:*] i, Parson!

SON. He's gone on over the moor.

PEASANT. Ay! but I can still catch ght of him. [*He calls out again:*] i! Look here. Can you remember here it was that we came out of the ad?

BRAND. [*In the mist.*] You have no ed of a cross-post; you are on the oad road sure enough.

PEASANT. Would to God I were, en I might sit warm and comfortable home this evening.

[*He and his son go off again eastard.*]

BRAND. [*Coming into sight higher ; he looks in the direction where the* ASANT *has gone.*] There they are, pping their way home. You weakeed thrall, if there had only been a le spring of Will welling up in your east, if it had only been the power u lacked, I would have lightened the difficulties of the way for you; my back is weary to death and my feet are bleeding; but I could easily, and would gladly, have carried you; but help is useless to a man who *will* not what he can not. [*He goes on farther.*] Ah! life, life; it's a hard thing how dear life is to these people! Every pigmy lays as much store by his own life as if the salvation of the world, the health of all men's souls, were laid upon his puny shoulders. They will make plenty of sacrifices, God bless me! but life, life—that must be spared. [*He smiles as if he remembered something.*] When I was a boy, two ideas came into my head and made me writhe with inward laughter; they got me a tanned skin, too, when our old dame was out of temper. I imagined an owl afraid in the dark, and a fish with hydrophobia. I laughed out loud; I tried to smuggle them away out of my mind, but they stuck in tooth and nail. What did it arise from, that burst of laughter? It must have arisen from a vague consciousness of the variance there is between a thing as it is, and a thing as it ought to be; between being obliged to bear, and finding the burden too weary. Almost every man in this country, sick or sound, is just such an owl and such a fish. He is made to toil in the deep, he is born to live the gloom of life, and *this* is what frightens him. He flounders in anguish on the edge of the beach, he clouds the stars of his own sky, he screams out: "Air and sunshine!" [*He stands still a moment, then starts and listens.*] What was that? It sounds like singing. Yes, it is singing mingled with laughter. Hark! there's a shout, now another—a third—a fourth—a fifth! The sun streams out. The mist

is lifting. I can see all the wide plains. Yonder stand the merry-makers on the highest ridge in the morning sunlight. Their shadow falls westward over the moorland; they exchange greetings and grasp each other's hands. Now they part. The rest turn eastward, but two come westward. Now they wave a last farewell, with hat and veil and hands. [*The sun breaks more and more through the fog;* BRAND *stands for some time looking down upon the people who are coming up.*] A light shines about those two. It seems as if the mist gave way and the heather clothed every slope and ridge; heaven seems to laugh round him and her. They must be brother and sister. They are springing hand in hand over the carpet of heather. Look! the girl scarcely touches the ground, and he is as lithe as willow-wand. There, she has slipped from him! she has escaped, just as he had caught her! Now their chase becomes a game, and hark! their laughter changes into song.

EJNAR and AGNES, *lightly clad for travelling, warm and glowing, come gambolling over the plain. The fog is gone; a clear summer morning lies over the fell.*

EJNAR. Agnes, my beautiful butterfly, my fleeting, floating of spring, I will pursue, if thou wilt fly—to be caught in the net of the songs I sing.

AGNES. If I be a beautiful butterfly, I fain would feed on the heather flowers; if thou in thy net to catch *me* wouldst try, thou must follow and follow for long, long hours.

EJNAR. Agnes, my beautiful butterfly, my snare to secure thee is surely set; thou need'st not strive, for assuredly thou hast well-nigh fluttere into my net.

AGNES. If I am a young brigh butterfly, I would have my delight i the swift short spring; but caught i *thy* net, I could only lie, full fain t fly—and move no wing.

EJNAR. In mine hands I will lif thee so tenderly; and thou shalt nestl within mine heart, that thou, O! m beautiful butterfly! shalt ever be fai e'en as now thou art.

[*They have come, without seeing i close to a steep precipice; they are no standing right on the brink.*]

BRAND. [*Screams down to them* Stop! stop! There's a precipice behin you.

EJNAR. Who is calling?

AGNES. [*Pointing upwards.*] Look

BRAND. Save yourselves before it too late! You are standing on the roo of a hollow drift—hanging over th side of a precipice.

EJNAR. [*Throwing his arm roun her, and laughing up at* BRAND.] W are not afraid of that, she and I.

AGNES. We have a whole life t play through.

EJNAR. A sunlit path is to be ou portion unending for a hundred year

BRAND. You don't go below unt then? I see!

AGNES. [*Waving her veil.*] No, the our play rises into the blue sky.

EJNAR. First a hundred years the merry throng, with bridal lamps every night—this is to be our life, hundred years' game of catch—

BRAND. And then—?

EJNAR. Then, home again— heaven.

BRAND. Oh! *that* is where you can from?

EJNAR. Of course—why? where
e?

AGNES. Yes—well—that is to say,
st *now* we came from the dale east
the fell.

BRAND. I fancied I caught a
mpse of you where the waters part.

EJNAR. Yes, it was there we have
st parted from our friends; we
essed hands, embraced and kissed
h other, and so set seals on all our
ppy memories. Come down to us! I
l tell you how beyond compare God
s been— You shall learn to under-
nd the power of joy! Fie! do not
nd there as if you were freezing!
me! melt and thaw—*that's* right.
rst, you must know, I am an artist,
l to give wing to my thoughts,
t has a charm in itself; and then to
able to charm life into my colours as
makes butterflies out of chrys-
des!—But above all, God was
rious when he gave me Agnes for
bride! I came from the south, from
g travels, with my artist's wallet on
back—

AGNES. [*Eagerly.*] As merry as a
g, so fresh and confident—and he
w hundreds of songs.

EJNAR. Just when I was passing
ough the commune, she was up there
a visit. She wanted to drink in the
of the fell—the sun and the dew
l the scent of the spruces. Some
racle drove me up thither; a voice
g within me: "Seek the source of
uty on the heath where the spruces
w, along the woodland river, among
clouds that fly below the vault of
ven!" There I painted my master-
ce; the blush of the rose upon her
ek, eyes glowing with happiness, a
le that sang within my soul—

AGNES. But you scarcely saw what you were painting—you drank the chalice of life at a blind draught, and stood in the sunlight again with your staff in your hand and your wallet slung—

EJNAR. Then the thought flew by me: "Why, you have quite forgotten to woo!" Hurrah! the wooing and the answer were soon over, and everything was clear and unravelled. Our old doctor was so glad he scarcely knew what to do with himself. He gave a feast for three days and nights together, with dancing and singing in honour of her and me; the Baillie, the Constable, the Parson, and the Magistrate, and all the grown youths downwards, came as guests. We broke up at the farm last night; but the merry-making did not end for all that; we were brought upon our way, over the slopes and along the ridge, by a crowd with flags on poles, and garlands around their hats.

AGNES. Our walk over the moorland was like a dance now two and two, and now in groups.

EJNAR. We drank sweet wine from a silver stoop—

AGNES. Our songs rang through the summer night.

EJNAR. And the fog that fell heavy from the north, stole obediently away as we went on.

BRAND. And now your way leads—

EJNAR. Straight on to the town.

AGNES. My home is there.

EJNAR. But first we must pass the summits; then down to the creek on the western fjord; then on Egir's horse we ride with full steam up, home to our bridal feast; and then to a southern

land together like swans on their first flight—!

BRAND. And then—?

EJNAR. A merry bridal life, fair as a legend, vast as a dream! for you must know, on this Sunday morning, though we were in the midst of the moorland, and there was no Parson, our life has been sanctified from sorrow, and consecrated as a festival of happiness.

BRAND. By whom?

EJNAR. By all the merry company. At the clash of the glasses every storm-cloud, that dared to hang upon the light foliage about our nest, was banished. They drove out of the language every word ominous of the murmur of a storm; they crowned us with leaves in our hair very children of gladness.

BRAND. Farewell, both of you! [*He is going.*]

EJNAR. [*Starting, and looking at him closer.*] No, stop! Wait a minute! Something in your look strikes me as familiar.

BRAND. [*Coldly.*] I am a stranger to you.

EJNAR. And yet either at school or at home, I feel certain I remember—

BRAND. At school; true, we were friends then: *then* I was a boy; *now* I am a man.

EJNAR. It can never be— [*Then, exclaiming suddenly:*] Brand! Why, yes, it *is* you! *Now* I know you!

BRAND. I knew you, the first moment.

EJNAR. Well met, well met, with all my heart! Look at me! Yes, you are the old Brand, always so selfsufficient, no game could ever entice you to join your schoolfellows' boisterous company.

BRAND. True, among you was no home for me. Yet I believe I was fond of *you*, although all you down south were of another metal than I—born on a ness by the water, in the shadow of a barren moor.

EJNAR. Your native parish—Ah, it is here, isn't it?

BRAND. My way now leads through it.

EJNAR. *Through* it? Really? Then you are going further?

BRAND. Yes, much further;—long beyond my home.

EJNAR. You are a Parson, I see.

BRAND. [*Smiling.*] A Diocesan Pastor. My home is one day one place and another, like a hare in a spruce coppice.

EJNAR. Then what is your final destination?

BRAND. [*Sternly and hastily.*] Do not ask.

EJNAR. Why?

BRAND. [*Changing his tone.*] Oh well!—the ship that is waiting for you two will bear me also away.

EJNAR. My bridal steed? Hurrah hurrah! Fancy, Agnes, he is coming the same way!

BRAND. Yes, but *I* . . . am going to a wake.

AGNES. To a wake?

EJNAR. Are you? Who is going to be buried?

BRAND. The God you have just called yours.

EJNAR. Brand!

BRAND. Yes, every God of serfdom every God of daily drudgery, shall be laid out in shroud and coffin, in the full light of day. There must be an end to it. It is time you understood; he has been ailing these hundred years.

AGNES. [*Turning away.*] Come, nar!

EJNAR. Brand, you are sick!

BRAND. No; sound and fresh as a -tree on the ridge, or a juniper on e hills; it is this present sickly gen- ation that wants curing. You only re to laugh and play and trifle; you n *believe* in detail, but you will not e. You want to leave all the anguish the burden upon One Who, they tell u, came and suffered the great penal-

He let Himself be crowned with orns for you, so you are free to nce. Dance away, but whither you nce is another matter, my friend!

EJNAR. Oh, I see! This is the new ne that is so popular now in town d country. You belong to the est school, who call life "dust and nity," and want to drive the whole rld into sackcloth from dread of ne pit."

BRAND. Not at all—I am not "a eachifier"; I am not speaking as a rson of the Church; I scarcely know ether I am a Christian; but I am rtain of *this,* I am a Man; and I am rtain I can see the flaw that has ained the marrow out of this coun- .

EJNAR. [*Smiling.*] I have never ard that before—our good country h a reputation for excess in the de of life.

BRAND. No, no! joy makes flaws in breast; if that were so, then it were ll. Grant that you *are* a slave to rth, only be one from one day's end another. Do not be one thing one or one year, and something else next. Whatever you are, be that olly and entirely, and not by bits, cemeal. The Bacchant is a distinct idea; a toper its failure. Silenus is a picturesque figure; a drunkard his caricature. Only go about this country and observe each man and you will see that everyone has learnt to be a little of everything. He retains a little veil of seriousness for Sunday use, a little adherence to the customs of his fathers, a little pruriency after supper—for *that* was the same with his fathers—a little warm-heartedness when there is merry-making and he hears songs about the little rock-fast rock-folk" who have never borne stick or bludgeon, a little lavish as far as promises go, and a little hair-splitting when he soberly discusses the promise he gave at a feast for fulfillment on the day of crisis. But all, as I say, only quite a little; his failure, his superiority, do not go far; he is a fraction in great and small, a fraction in evil and a fraction in good; but the worst of it is, every factor of the fraction utterly vitiates all the rest.

EJNAR. It is an easy thing to scoff; it would be much finer to forebear.

BRAND. Maybe; but not so salutary.

EJNAR. Very well; I add "Amen" and "So be it" to your bundle of the popular transgressions, but still I do not see what it has to do with Him Whom you want to put into His coffin —the God I still call Mine.

BRAND. My merry friend, you are a painter, are you not? Show me the God of whom you speak. You have painted him, I hear, and your picture has moved the people. He is getting on in years; is not that so?

EJNAR. Well—yes.

BRAND. Quite so. And gray, with thin hair like an elderly gentleman, and a beard like ice or silver thread;

not ill-natured, but still severe enough to frighten children off to bed? Whether you put him on slippers—well, I let that go for what it is worth, but I am sure it would be appropriate if he wore spectacles and a skull-cap.

EJNAR. [*Angry.*] What is the drift of all—

BRAND. It is not a joke. It is just exactly like this that our country's, our people's family God looks. As the Catholic converts the Hero of the Redemption into a mere suckling, so you turn the Lord into a decrepit old man almost in his second childhood. As the Pope has scarcely anything left on Peter's chair but a double picklock, so you narrow our Lord's kingdom—which stretches from pole to pole—into a Church. You separate life from faith and instruction. To *be* is no one's concern. Your endeavour is to raise your souls, not to live a complete and thorough life. For such dilly-dallying as that, you want a God who'll peep through his fingers. This generation's God, like itself, must be getting gray, and should be painted with a bald pate and skull-cap. But this God is not Mine! Mine is Storm where yours is a wind; Inexorable where yours is deaf; All-loving where yours is dull of heart. He is young, too, like Hercules; not an old *Godfather* of sixty! His is the voice that pealed forth with lightning and terror when He stood before Moses like a fire in the thornbush on Mount Horeb, a giant before a dwarf of dwarfs. He made the sun stand still in the Valley of Gibeon, and did wonders without number, and would do them still, if this generation were not slack like you!

EJNAR. [*With an incredulous smile.*] And now the generations is to be re generated?

BRAND. It will, mark you; I am cer tain—I *know*—that I am come int the world to heal its sickness and it flaws!

EJNAR. [*Shaking his head.*] D not put out the match, even if it doe smoke, before the lantern lights th road; do not strike out the old glossar of the language before you have create new words.

BRAND. I aim at nothing new; would uphold the rights of things eter nal. It is not dogmas or churches would exalt by my work; both sa their first day, and therefore it is ver likely both will see their last evening Every created thing, we know, ha "finis" written after it; it gets tainte by moth and worm, and in accordanc with all law and rule must give wa to a new form. But there is somethin which lasts; the Spirit which was n created, which was rescued at its lowes ebb in the first fresh spring of time which by confident human faith threw a bridge from the flesh to the Spirit' Source. Now it is hawked about re tail, thanks to this generation's view about God. But out of these frag ments of Soul, out of these lumpis trunks of Spirit, out of these head and hands, a *Whole* shall arise, so tha the Lord shall recognise His man again His greatest work, His heir, Adam young and strong.

EJNAR. [*Interrupting.*] Farewell I think it is best for us to part here.

BRAND. Go you to the west, and will go to the north. There are tw roads to the fjord; they are equall short. Farewell!

EJNAR. Farewell.

BRAND. [*Turning round before he ɟins to descend.*] Divide light from pour. Remember this, life is an art.

EJNAR. [*Waving him off.*] Turn ɜ world upside down if you will; I ld to my old God.

BRAND. Good! Paint him with his ıtches; I am going to lay him in his ıve.

[*He goes away down the path.*]

[EJNAR *goes on in silence, and looks ɯn after* BRAND.]

AGNES. [*She stands still for a mo-ɲt, as if in absence of mind; then ɜ starts, looks round uneasily, and ɛs:*] Has the sun gone down?

EJNAR. No; it was only a cloud ssing before it. Now it is shining ain.

AGNES. There is a cold wind here.

EJNAR. It was a blast that swept ht through the gap. Here we de-nd.

AGNES. The mountain did not stand re to the south, looking so black and cking the way, before.

EJNAR. You did not notice it be-se of our songs and games, until frightened you with his croaking. t leave him to climb his own nar-v stairs; we will pick up our game ere we dropped it.

AGNES. No, not now — I am tired w.

EJNAR. Well, really and truly, so I, and down below the path is not easy as it was back there on the el moor. But when we have the ghts behind us, then we will dance ; of sheer perversity—that we will, h ten times more life and spirit than would have otherwise—— Look, nes! look at that blue streak that sunlight glitters upon; now it rip-ples, now it laughs, now it is silver, and now amber—that is the great, fresh sea that you see furthest off there! And can you see the black smoke sweeping up along the channel? and the black speck just rounding the ness? Look! that is the steamer—yours and mine! Now it is steaming on into the fjord! To-morrow it will stand out to sea, with you and me on board! Now the mist veils it, heavy and gray—— Look, Agnes! do you notice what a beautiful colour the sea and the sky are becoming?

AGNES. [*She stares before her absently, and says:*] Y-es; but tell me, did you see—?

EJNAR. What?

AGNES. [*Without looking at him, and in a low tone, as if she were in church.*] How he seemed to grow while he was speaking?

[*She goes on down the path.* EJNAR *follows her.*]

SCENE—*A path along the bluff of the fell, with a wild and deep valley beyond, to the right. Higher up, behind the mountain, are glimpses of greater heights, with peaks and snow.*

BRAND. [*He is coming along the path; he descends, stops half-way on a projecting nab, and looks down into the valley.*] Ah! I know where I am again, now. Every boathouse, every homestead, the landslip hill, the birch-trees on the estuary, and the old brown church, the elder-bushes on the river brink — I can remember it all from childhood. But I fancy it looks grayer now and smaller; and the snow-drift on the mountain hangs further out than it did then. It has cut off another strip from the valley's narrow tract of sky; it beetles, menaces, overshadows, shuts

it in, and steals away the sunshine more than ever. [*He sits down and gazes into the distance.*] Was the fjord so grim and narrow *then?*—Squally weather! There's a square-rigged boat bearing in before the breeze. To the south, under cover of the crag, I can see a warehouse and a wharf, and there, behind, a farm painted red. That's the widow's farm on the estuary sands. The widow's farm—the home of my childhood; memories of memories swarm out from it. There among the stones on the strand my child-soul was—alone. A weight oppresses me—the bond of kinship with a spirit that always pointed earthward, outside my true self. All that before I willed should be *great,* now looks bleared as if behind a veil. Courage and strength have failed me, heart and soul have grown slack and brittle; here, as I come near my home, I look upon myself as a stranger—I wake like Samson, bound and shorn and tame in the harlot's lap. [*He looks again down into the valley.*] What is all that stir and bustle? Men, women, and children throng out from every farm and homestead. Now the long lines are lost among the stony slopes and pitches; now they start up again, away by the old church. [*He stands up.*] Oh! I know you through and through, slack of soul, dull of heart! Your whole "Our Father" has not enough strength in its flight, nor anguish in its groaning, to reach Heaven and be heard like the cry of a living voice—except only the fourth petition! *That* is the watch word of the country; *that* has become the people's cry. It is snatched out of its context and then written in every heart; there it lies, a storm-tossed frag ment from the wreck of your whol creed! Away from this sultry hole The air is like the vapours of a mine no flag can fly its colours here, un furled by a fresh breeze!

[*He is going; a stone is thrown fron above, and rolls down over the slope close to him.*]

BRAND. [*Shouting up.*] Heigh there! Who is that throwing stones

[GERD, *a girl of fifteen, running alon on the crest of the mountain, wit stones in her apron.*]

GERD. He screeched! I hit him! [*She throws again.*

BRAND. Look here, child! stop tha game!

GERD. There he sits unhurt, swing ing on a blown-off branch. [*She throw again, and screams out:*] There he i coming as fierce as ever! Help! Shu he is tearing me with his claws!

BRAND. In the Lord's name—

GERD. Hush! Who are you? Kee still, keep still; he is flying now.

BRAND. Who is flying?

GERD. Didn't you see the hawk?

BRAND. Here? No.

GERD. The great ugly bird, with hi crest lowered flat against his head, an the red and golden rim about his eyes

BRAND. Whither does your roa lead?

GERD. To church.

BRAND. Oh, then we can join con pany.

GERD. We two? No, I am goin upwards, here.

BRAND. [*Pointing below.*] But th church is *there.*

GERD. [*Looking at him, and smilin scornfully; she points below.*] Th one *there?*

BRAND. Yes, of course; come with
e.

GERD. No; it's ugly.

BRAND. Ugly—why?

GERD. It *is*—it's so *small*.

BRAND. Where have you seen a
reater?

GERD. A greater? Ah! I know
ell enough. Farewell.

[*She goes on upwards.*]

BRAND. Is *that* the way to your
urch? Why, that leads to the wild
oor-land.

GERD. Follow me, you, and then you
all see a church built of ice and
ow.

BRAND. Of ice and snow?—*Now* I
derstand! I remember hearing when
was a boy that somewhere in among
e peaks and summits, at the head of
valley, there is a chasm; I believe
was called the Ice Church. All sorts
tales are told about it. A frozen
rn forms the groundwork and the
or, and the snow that lies piled on
e drift stretches out life a roof over
e crests of the gaping wedge of rocks.

GERD. Yes, it *looks* like fell and ice;
t for all that it *is* a church.

BRAND. Never go thither; a gust of
ind has often caused a brae to give
ay; a rifle-shot, a scream, is enough—

GERD. [*Without listening to him.*]
me with me and see a herd of rein-
er, which the slide buried, so that
ey never appeared again until last
ring, at the great thaw.

BRAND. Never go thither; it is un-
fe *there*.

GERD. [*Pointing below.*] Never go
ither; it is ugly *there*.

BRAND. The peace of God be with
u!

GERD. You'd better come too. Up
there, fall and slide sing Mass; the wind preaches against the wall of the glacier, till you grow hot and cold at once. And the hawk never steals in there; he swoops down upon Svartetind; — there he sits, the ugly brute, like a weathercock on my church steeple.

BRAND. A wild way and a wild soul; a cithern with a cracked case! From the Mean comes meanness only, pure and simple; but active evil can easily be converted into good.

GERD. Here he comes with his whirring wings! Now I must be getting indoors. Farewell. In the church I am safe—Ugh! here he comes, savage and grim. [*Screaming out.*] Don't come near me! I'll throw stones at you. If you strike with claws, I'll strike with boughs.

[*She runs away up over the fell.*]

BRAND. [*After a pause.*] There! that is a church-goer, too. In the valley — on the moor — which is best? Which flickers worst and w i l d e s t? which is groping the farthest from peace and home? The Light-hearted, with his garland of leaves, led by his games along the brink of the sheerest gulf? The Faint-hearted, going his slothful way because it is his use and wont? The Wrong-hearted, of so wild a flight that as fast as he sees evil it seems good to him? To the fight, to the fight through thick and thin, with this Triple Alliance! I see my Call; it gleams like the sun through the chink of a shutter left ajar. I know my mission; in the fall of these three trolds is the world's woe to be mended. If this generation can get *them* laid in the grave first, then the world's pestilence can be blown away. Up! arm, my

soul! Draw thy sword from thy side! To the fight for the heirs of heaven!

[*He descends into the valley.*]

ACT II.

SCENE — *Down by the fjord, surrounded by steep mountain bluffs. The old tumbledown church stands on a small piece of rising ground near. A storm is gathering.* PEASANTS — *men, women, and children—are gathered in knots, partly on the strand and partly on the rising ground. The* BAILLIE [FOGDEN] *sits on a stone in the midst of them; his* CLERK *is helping him; corn and provisions are being distributed.* EJNAR *and* AGNES, *surrounded by a crowd, are standing further off. Some boats lie on the beach.* BRAND *gets as far as the rising ground where the church stands, without being noticed by the people.*

MAN. [*Forcing himself through the crowd.*] Out of the way!

WOMAN. I was here first.

MAN. [*Shoving her aside.*] Get along! [*He pushes on to the* BAILLIE.] Look here. Fill my bag; it's empty.

BAILLIE. Give me time.

MAN. Can't; I must get home. Four of them—five—sit there starving.

BAILLIE. [*Joking.*] You don't seem quite certain about the number.

MAN. One was in his death-struggle when I came away.

BAILLIE. Wait a little. You're on the list all right? [*Turning over his papers.*] No.—Ah, yes; here you are. That's lucky for you. [*To his* CLERK:] Give number twenty-nine his.—Now, now, my good friends, just wait a little. —Nils Snemyr.

MAN. Yes?

BAILLIE. To-day you only get three-quarters of what you got last time. You see, you're fewer now.

MAN. We are; Ragnhuld is dead—yesterday.

BAILLIE [*making a note of it*]. One less. A saving's a saving. [*To the* MAN, *as he is moving away:*] But don't go off in a hurry and marry a second time.

CLERK [*giggling*]. Hee! hee!

BAILLIE [*sharply*]. What are you laughing at?

CLERK. I laughed because the Herr Foged is so witty.

BAILLIE. Be quiet! This meeting is not a joke; but jests are the best remedy for tears.

EJNAR [*stepping out of the crowd with* AGNES]. There, I have emptied my last pocket, and my purse and pocket-book are empty too. I go on board a beggar; I must put my watch and staff in pawn.

BAILLIE. Ah! you two came just at the right time. What I've collected is only a little. There's not enough as anyone can tell, when needy hands and hungry mouths have to share fragments of fragments with those who haven't got a bit to eat. [*He catches sight of* BRAND *and points up to him.*] Another welcome! If you have heard of the famine and the flood and the drought then loose your purse strings if they're tied. We accept all sorts; our supplies are nearly come to an end. Five small fishes in the desert of poverty don't make a meal nowadays.

BRAND. Ten thousand served in the name of an idol, would not profit a single soul.

BAILLIE. I didn't ask you for words; words are mere stones when the belly's empty.

EJNAR. It is impossible you can ow how long and how terribly the ople have suffered! It has been a d year here, Brand, with famine and kness. Here lie dead—

BRAND. I can see it well. By the rk circle round all their eyes, one n tell who it is that holds his court.

BAILLIE. And yet you stand there hard as flint.

BRAND [*stepping down among the owd, and speaking earnestly*]. If life course gently with its mere daily re flowed soft and smooth, running ed, then I could pity your cries for ead. If you are forced to creep home all fours, then the beast within you mes out. If day after day passes drowsy peace, at a walking pace, e a funeral, then a man may well ink that he is struck out of the rd's book. But to you He has shown re favour; He has shed horror into ur blood; He has scourged you with e whips of mortal need; what He ve at a dear price, He took away ain—

SEVERAL VOICES [*breaking out into reats against him*]. He spurns us in our need!

BAILLIE. Does he scold us for giving u bread?

BRAND [*shaking his head*]. Oh, if my heart's blood could quench your irst like a health-giving stream, it ould flow out in a river until the bed my veins was empty and dry. But help here would be sin! Look, you! od wills to lift you out of the mire. living people, even if it be feeble d dispersed, sucks marrow and rength out of affliction; the dull sight ars like the falcon, and sees fair ings from afar; the weak Will puts up its back and sees certain victory beyond the strife; but if necessity breeds no heroism, the people are not worth their own redemption!

WOMAN. A storm is breaking over the fjord, as if it had awoken at his words!

ANOTHER. Mark my words! He angers God!

BRAND. *Your* God does no mighty works!

WOMEN. Look at the weather! Look!

VOICES AMONG THE CROWD. Drive the hard man out of the Commune with stones and knives.

[*The Peasants swarm around* BRAND *threateningly. The* BAILLIE *interferes. A* WOMAN, *wild and dishevelled, comes down in haste over the rising ground.*]

WOMAN [*shrieking out to the crowd*]. In Jesus's name, where shall I find help?

BAILLIE. What's the matter? Tell us what needs, what want—?

WOMAN. It's not a matter now of needs and wants! It's the most terrible thing in the world!

BAILLIE. What is it? Speak!

WOMAN. I have no words! Where can I find the Parson? Help! comfort!

BAILLIE. There's no Parson here.

WOMAN. Lost, lost! It was hard of Thee, O! God, that I was made.

BRAND [*approaching*]. Perhaps one *can* be found.

WOMAN [*seizing him by the arm*]. Then let him come; don't be long!

BRAND. Tell me your trouble, and he will come.

WOMAN. Right across the fjord—

BRAND. Now?

WOMAN. My husband—three starving little ones, and the house empty,—

say "No," say "No"—he is not damned!

BRAND. Tell me, first.

WOMAN. My breast was dried up; there was no help for us in man nor God; the youngest was fighting hard with death; it cut into his soul; he killed the child!

BRAND. Killed him!

PEASANTS [*in horror*]. His own child!

WOMAN. The same instant he saw to the nethermost depth of his deed! His remorse gushed out like a river; he laid violent hands on himself. Come, save his soul, in spite of sea and storm! He cannot live and he dare not die; he lies hugging the corpse, calling on the devil's name.

BRAND [*quietly*]. Yes, this *is* Need.

EJNAR [*pale*]. Is such a thing possible?

BAILLIE. He doesn't belong to my district.

BRAND [*curtly to the peasants*]. Unmoor a boat and put me across.

MAN. In such a storm? There's not a man dare.

BAILLIE. There's a path round the fjord—

WOMAN. No, no! there's no road that way now; I came by it, but the river's in flood—it cut away the bridge just behind me.

BRAND. Unmoor the boat.

MAN. Now! it can't be done; the water is breaking over the shoal and the half-tide rock.

A SECOND MAN. Look there, a gust that swept down from the heights; the whole fjord is seething.

A THIRD MAN. If the weather is like this,—such a shrieking roaring storm—the Provost reads no Mass.

BRAND. A sinner's soul, whose doom is near, cannot wait for wind and weather! [*He goes and gets the boat and loosens the sail.*] Will you risk the boat?

OWNER. Yes, but stop!

BRAND. Good; now, where's a man who will risk his life?

MAN. I won't go with you.

A SECOND MAN. Nor I, either!

SEVERAL. It'ld be the straight road to death.

BRAND. *Your* God would help no man over; but remember *Mine* is with me on board!

WOMAN [*wringing her hands*]. He is dying unshriven.

BRAND [*calling from the boat*]. One man is enough, to help me with the scoop and the foresail! Come, one of you who gave just now. Come, men, *give* unto death and the grave.

MANY OF THE MEN [*drawing back*]. Don't ask it!

ONE OF THE MEN [*threateningly*]. Out of the boat! It is too presumptuous to tempt God!

MANY VOICES. Look! the storm's rising.

OTHERS. The rope has broken!

BRAND [*holding himself fast with the boathook, and shouting to the strange woman*]. Well, you come then; but come quick!

WOMAN [*drawing back*]. I! There where no one—

BRAND. Let them stay!

WOMAN. I cannot.

BRAND. Cannot?

WOMAN. Remember the children! [BRAND *laughs.*]

BRAND. The ground you build on is *muck!*

AGNES [*she turns quickly with blushing cheeks to* EJNAR, *lays her hand on*

s arm, and says:]. Have you heard *all?*

EJNAR. Yes, he is brave!

AGNES. God bless thee! Thou nowest thy work. [*She shouts out to* BRAND:] Here!—here is *one* man orthy to follow on an errand of ercy.

BRAND. Come, then!

EJNAR [*pale*]. I?

AGNES. Go! I have given thee! ine eyes look upward; before, they ere cast down.

EJNAR. Before I met thee, I would ve given myself, and sailed with him llingly.

AGNES [*trembling*]. But now—

EJNAR. My life is young and pre- ous; I *can* not do it.

AGNES [*shrinking back*]. What did u say?

EJNAR. I *dare* not do it!

AGNES [*screaming out*]. Now a orld-wide sea, with scourge of gale d rust of currents, is laid between . [*To* BRAND:] *I* am going in the at.

BRAND. Well, then come!

WOMAN [*In terror, as she leaps on ard.*] Jesus, help!

EJNAR [*Catching at her desperate-*] Agnes!

WHOLE CROWD [*Hastening up.*] op! Turn back!

BRAND. Where is the house?

WOMAN [*Pointing.*] Right over ere, on the point behind the black erry.

[*The boat is pushed off.*]

EJNAR [*Crying out after them.*] ink of your brothers and sisters! nk of your mother! Don't throw ay your life!

AGNES. We are *three* on board!

[*The boat sails off. The Peasants throng together on the high ground, and watch it in great excitement.*]

MAN. He's cleared the spit!

SECOND. No!

FIRST MAN. Yes, he has, look; he's left it behind him to leeward.

SECOND MAN. There's a gust! That's got them!

BAILLIE. Look, it has carried off his hat!

WOMAN. His wet hair streams wild in the wind, as black as a raven's wing.

FIRST MAN. The water's all boiling and seething.

EJNAR. What was that scream, that pierced the storm?

WOMAN. It came from the fell.

SECOND WOMAN. [*Pointing up*]. It's Gerd; there she stands, laughing and howling after him!

FIRST WOMAN. She's blowing in a buck's horn, and throwing stones for witching-corn.

SECOND WOMAN. Now she has slung her horn like a staff, and is hooting in the hollow of her hand.

MAN. Ah, hoot and scream, you vile troll! that man's got his own Shield and Buckler.

SECOND MAN. I'll go on the fjord next time in worse weather than this, and glad, with him at the helm.

FIRST MAN. [*to* EJNAR.] What was he?

EJNAR. A Pastor.

SECOND MAN. What was he? That's plain enough: he was a Man. There was courage and strength and defiance in *him.*

FIRST MAN. There'll be a proper Parson for us.

MANY VOICES. True! he'll be the proper Parson for us!

[*They disperse over the rising ground.*]

BAILLIE. [*Collecting his papers and books.*] At all events, it is out of order to step into another man's business, and interfere and risk life without urgent cause. *I* also go on steadily doing my duty, but always within my own district. [*He goes.*]

SCENE—*Outside the hut on the point. It is late in the day. The fjord lies smooth and still.*

AGNES *is sitting down on the strand. A little later* BRAND *comes out at the door.*

BRAND. That was death. It has washed off all the stain and the horrible dread; now he lies with a calm, grand look upon his face, enlightened of his darkness, and lightened of his burden. Can a passing delusion turn night into a day like this? Of his wild hell deeds he only saw the outer crust—that which can be named with the mouth or handled with the hands; that which brands his name with infamy—his violence on the dead child. But those two, who sat scared and silent, staring with wide eyes, crouched in the chimney-corner, like birds roosting together;—those two, who only looked and looked, not even knowing at what;—those two, into whose souls a stain was eating, that in all the wear and tear of time they will never scrub out, not even when they are old men, bent and hoary;—those two, the river of whose life shall flow out from these ugly memories;—those two, who must now grow up with the horror of his deed of darkness to lighten them;—those two, from whom no funeral-pyre can consume the carcase of this thought;—he could not discern, that *those two* were the two specially burdened with the great liability.—And from them, perhaps, issues link upon link of sin and crime. Why?—The void abyss re-echoes: "They were sons of their father!" What will be scored out in silence? What will mercy erase? Where does the load of responsibility for the heritage of the race begin? What a Session day *that* will be, and what a Judge, when the great hearing comes! Who will collect evidence? who will bear witness where every man is guilty? who will dare to lay out his foul transferred documents? Will the answer "The debt dates from my father" be accepted then? Oh, dizzy depth of an impenetrable riddle, no man can read thee! But the crowd dance on, heartless and heedless on the brink of the abyss. The soul should quake and cry aloud, but not one in a thousand has eyes to see what a Mountain of Offence towers up out of that little word life.

[*Some of the Peasants come from behind the house and go up to* BRAND.]

MAN. We meet again, you see.

BRAND. The man does not need your help.

MAN. He is helped, he is free; but there are still three left in the cottage.

BRAND. Well?

MAN. We have brought with us a few morsels of what crumbs we got.

BRAND. If you have given everything except life, know, you have given nothing.

MAN. If he, who now lies here dead, were brought into mortal peril to-day, and cried from the keel of his boat for help, I would risk life itself.

BRAND. But the soul's need has no weight?

MAN. Remember we are a drudging ee.

BRAND. Then turn your eyes fully d wholly from the light above the l-tops; don't squint, as you do now, th the left eye to heaven and the ht to the earth, on which you have wed your backs and harnessed your- ves to the yoke.

MAN. I should have thought you uld have counselled us rather to cast the yoke.

BRAND. Yes, if you can.

MAN. *You* have the power.

BRAND. Have I?

MAN. Many a man, before now, has d us, and *shown* us where the way s—they *pointed* to it, but *you lked* in it.

BRAND. Do you think—?

MAN. A thousand words leave less rk than the footprint of one deed. e have sought you in the name of parish. We see it—a *Man* is what need.

BRAND. [*Uneasily.*] What do you nt of me?

MAN. Be our Pastor.

BRAND. I? Here?

MAN. You must have heard and read parish has no Pastor.

BRAND. Yes, now I remember—

MAN. In former times the parish s large; now it is small. When the l year came, and the corn was frozen, l sickness fell on the people and the tle, and poverty brought every man vn upon his knee, and distress sung ry soul a-dozing, and there was a rth of meat and grain, then came a rth of Parsons too.

BRAND. Ask what you will, but er that! A *greater* mission is laid upon me. I need life's strong emotions; I need the world's open ears. What can I do here? Where the fell blocks the way, a man's speech has no power.

MAN. Words that are fully, boldly spoken sound longer where the Fell answers.

BRAND. What man will bury himself up in the hollow, when the broad, free meadow invites him? Who will plough the fallow waste, when he can find well tilled land? Who will seek fruit from kernels, when his young trees are ready to bear? Who will toil on through the turmoil of daily drudgery, when he possesses the light and the wings of sight?

MAN. [*Shaking his head.*] Your deed I understood, not your words.

BRAND. Ask me no more! I must go on board!

[*He is going.*]

MAN. [*Stepping in front of him.*] This Call that you will not give up, this work that you are yearning for now, is it, then, dear to you?

BRAND. It is my whole *life.*

MAN. Then, stay! [*With emphasis:*] If you have given everything except life, then, remember, you have given nothing.

BRAND. There is one possession which a man cannot give; his own inner self. He dare not bind, he dare not shackle, he dare not stem the river of his Call; that must go on its way to the depth of the sea.

MAN. If it were buried in meer or tarn, still it reaches the sea at last, in the form of dew.

BRAND. [*Looking earnestly at him.*] Who put such words in your mouth?

MAN. *You* gave me them in the

hour of need. When the storm shrieked, when the sea surged, when you went forth in spite of storm and sea, when you staked your life upon a plank for a helpless sinner's soul, then the thought stole into many a mind, now hot now cold, like sun and wind; then it rang out as if tolled from a bell. [*His voice sinks.*] To-morrow, maybe, it will be forgotten; then we must lower the standard of resurrection that you hoisted over us to-day.

BRAND. Where there is no power, there is no call. [*Severely.*] If you cannot be what you *ought*, then be thoroughly what you *can;* be wholly and solely men of clay.

MAN. [*Looks at him for a moment, and says:*] Woe be to you, who have left us, and so quenched our light: woe be to us, who saw for a moment!

[*He goes; the rest follow him in silence.*]

BRAND. [*Watching them for some time.*] The men go home one by one, hanging their heads, in silence. Their spirits are cast down, and their feet drag and stumble on heavily and wearily. They walk as if each man of them were heavy-hearted, menaced with a rod like the father of mankind driven out of Paradise, departing like him with brows veiled in guilt, gazing like him into the dark void, carrying away even as he did the gain of their knowledge, and the loss of their blindness. I, even I, dare purpose to create mankind anew, whole and clean. *This* is my work. Now it is the image of sin, not of God, as it was meant to be. I must go out to wider fields; there is no room for chivalry in this place! [*He is going, but seeing* AGNES *on the strand, he stops.*] Look, how she sits and listens as if there were voices in the air! She listened as she sat in the boat when it cleft the surging waters; she listened as she held to the bench; she listened as she wiped off the froth of the sea-foam from her clear brow. She looks as if her hearing had changed its place and she listened with her eyes. [*Going nearer to her.*] Girl, is it the fjord's crooked course that your eyes are following?

AGNES. [*Without turning round.*] Neither the fjord's course nor the world's; both are hidden from sight. But I catch a glimpse of a greater world; its outline stands out sharp against the sky; I see seas and mouths of rivers; sunlight glints through the mist. I see a flood of red fiery light playing about cloud-capped peaks. I see a boundless waste of desert. There stand great palm-trees swaying in the keen winds, casting dark shadows behind them. No sign of life is to be seen, it is like a world still being created; and I hear the ring of voices, and I hear the sound of speech interpreting: "Now, thou art either saved or lost; work out thy work, bear the burden of thy responsibility—thou shalt people this earth!"

BRAND. [*Carried away.*] Tell me what more do you see!

AGNES. [*Laying her hand upon her breast.*] I know that powers smoulder *here;* I feel the floods swell, I see dawn break. The heart expands on every side, wide as a world, and I hear the sound of speech interpreting: *"This* is the world thou shalt people!" Every thought to come, every action to be done, breathes, awakens, whispers, moves, as if the moment of birth were come; and I feel rather than see Him

no is above and over us; I feel that is looking down full of sadness and e, radiant and calm as the glow of rning, and yet sorrowful even unto ıth; and I hear the voices ring: ow thou shalt create and be created; v thou art either saved or lost; work thy work, bear the burden of thy ponsibility."

Brand. Within, within! That is the rd! Thither is the way. There is track. One's own heart, *that* is the rld, re-create, ripe for the life of H; *there* must the vulture of self- l be slain, *there* must the new Adam born. Then let the world go its own t whether singing or enslaved; but so be we meet as foes, if it designs crush my work, then, by heaven, I ke! A place on the whole earth's uit, whereon to be wholly himself, t is the lawful right of man, and I no other! [*He thinks for a mo- nt in silence, and then says:*] To wholly one's self! But the weight one's heritage and debts from the e?— [*He stops, and looks into the ance.*] Who is that woman coming nbering up the hill, stooping and ding forward her neck? She is ced to stop and take breath; she ps herself to keep from tottering; is clutching tight in the depth of pockets as if she were cumbered h treasure. Her skirt hangs about withered shanks like folds of thered skin; her hand is clenched a pincers; she is like an eagle led to a stable wall! [*With sudden eboding.*] An icy memory from dhood, a gust from home and the rd, casts its frost about this woman; s a sharper frost within me!— rciful God! it is my mother!

Brand's Mother. [*Coming towards him; when half of her is visible above the hill, she stops, holds her hands up to shade her eyes, and looks about her.*] They said he was here. [*Coming nearer.*] Devil take the sun! it nearly blinds me. Son, is that you?

Brand. Yes.

Mother. [*Rubbing her eyes.*] Ugh! this glare, it scorches one's eyes; one can't tell Parson from peasant.

Brand. At home, I never saw the sun from the fall of the leaf until the cuckoo's cry.

Mother. [*Laughing quietly.*] No, it is nice there. There one gets frozen like the icicle-man over the waterfall. One gets so strong, one can do whatever one likes, and still feel all right.

Brand. Good-day; farewell. My time is short.

Mother. Yes, you have always been in a hurry. When you were a boy you were soon off from here.

Brand. You thought it best for me to go away.

Mother. Yes, it was as expedient then as now; it was very urgent that you should become a Pastor. [*She looks at him closer.*] H'm! he has grown strong and tall. But only mind what I say; be careful of your life!

Brand. Is that all?

Mother. What, life? Yes, what is there more?

Brand. I mean the advice you have just let drop—is *that* all?

Mother. If you know of more, use it as you like. But life, keep that for me; I gave it to you. [*Angrily.*] There has been talk far and wide of what you have been doing; and it has angered and alarmed me. On the fjord today! You might have robbed me of

what you ought to keep for my sake. You are the last of the race. You are my son, my flesh and blood. You are the top lath finishing off the roof of the house, that I have built up step by step. Hold fast; stand firm; and wear for many a long day! Be careful of your life! Never give in. To live is the duty of an heir—and you will be mine—some day—in the end—

BRAND. Really? Is *this* the reason you have come to look for me, with your pockets full?

MOTHER. Son, are you mad? [*Drawing back.*] Don't come near me! Stay where you are! I'll strike out with my staff! [*More quietly.*] What did you mean by that? Look here! I am ageing year by year; it ends in the grave sooner or later; then you'll get all I have ever possessed: it lies told and measured and weighed. I have nothing about me! The whole of it lies at home. It is not much; but he who gets it will be no beggar. Stay where you are! Don't come here! I promise you, I shan't put into cracks, or bury in some unknown place, a stiver—I shan't hide a thing under stones, or in the wall, or under the boards of the floor! You, my son, will get the inheritance untouched; the whole goes to you alone.

BRAND. On what conditions?

MOTHER. On this one, that you don't squander your life away. Keep up the family, son by son; I don't ask any other reward. And then take care that nothing is wasted, that nothing is parted or divided; increase or not what you get, only *keep* it, *keep* it, year after year.

BRAND. [*After a short pause.*] One thing must be made clear between us. I have gone counter to you from a boy; I have been no son, and you hav been no mother, until you have grow gray, and I have grown to manhoo

MOTHER. I don't ask for any pet ting or pampering. Be what you like I'm no ninny. Be hard and stubborr and as cold as an icicle, it won't pierc *my* breastplate; only keep your in heritance—if you like, dead and unpro ductive, provided it's in the possessio of the family!

BRAND. [*Going a step nearer.*] An if, on the contrary, I took it into m head to scatter it to the winds?

MOTHER. [*Staggering back.*] Scatte what has bent my back and bleache my hair during years of toil!

BRAND. [*nodding slowly.*] Scatte it.

MOTHER. Scatter it? If you do that you scatter my soul to the winds.

BRAND. And if I do it nevertheless If I stand one night beside your bed when the tapers are set before it, whe you sleep, with your prayer-book i your hands, death's first night; if the I snatch and grope and feel; if I rou out treasure after treasure; if I tak the candle; if I light—

MOTHER. [*Approaching excitedly.*] Where did you get those notions from

BRAND. Where from? Shall I tel you?

MOTHER. Yes.

BRAND. From an adventure of m childhood, which has never passed ou of my mind: it seems my soul, lik the scar of a healed hare-lip. It wa an autumn evening. My father la dead, and you were sick. I stole i where he lay pale in the taper light I stood in a corner and stared; I sa him holding his prayer-book; wha made me wonder most was his dee

ıce, and why his wrists were so
ll; I noticed the smell of clammy
n; then I heard a footfall on the
r; a woman came in: she did not
me; she went straight up to the
. She set to work routing and rum-
ging; first she moved the dead man's
d, then she pulled out a bundle,
several more: she counted. whis-
ng: "More, more!" Then from un-
the pillows of the bed she groped out
acket bound up with knots; she tore
part with her teeth. She groped
in. She found more. She counted,
spering: "More, more!" She wept,
prayed, she wailed, she swore; she
scent of the treasure track—and
found, she swooped like a falcon,
ın agony of delight, straight upon
prey. At last every corner was
tied, and she slung from the room
a criminal condemned; she
pped up her treasure in a cloth,
moaned low: "And this was *all!*"
IOTHER. My longing was great, and
vas but little that I found; it was
l for more than dear.
RAND. It cost you dearer still; it
your son's heart—mine—from

IOTHER. So be it! It's the old
y—paying for possession with heart
conscience. The highest price I
was at the first, I know it, I gave
wrecking of my life; I gave up
ething now extinct—I picture it to
elf as light and wings, as some-
g at once foolish and beautiful; I
up what I can scarcely conceive
longer—people called it "love."
member well it was a hard strug-
I remember well the advice father
me: "Forget the cottager's lad,
take the other. Don't mind his
wizen carcase. He's a fellow with brains in his skull; he's doubling what he had!" I took him, and got shame for thanks. He never reached the double. But I have drudged and toiled so hard since that there is only a little wanting to it now.

BRAND. Do you remember, too, so near your grave, that you gave your soul into the bargain?

MOTHER. The best proof that I remembered *that* was that I put my son to be made a Pastor. When the hour comes you must provide for my interests, in return for your inheritance. I have property both in land and goods; you have words and strength and faith.

BRAND. However clever you may be, you saw amiss when you saw me in the family mirror. There's many a one by slope and channel who feels such family affection. You look upon a child as a steward of the posthumous family rags. Every now and again a gleam of eternity passes through your thoughts; you snatch at it and think that by tying up your property to your family, you come very near the point of unifying death and life. You think you can produce eternity out of the sum of a series of years.

MOTHER. Son, do not pry into your mother's thoughts, but take your inheritance when it falls to you.

BRAND. And the debts.

MOTHER. The debts? what debts? There are no debts.

BRAND. Well, but if there were, I should be bound to answer for each bill, and settle every item. It is a son's duty to satisfy every demand to the full by his mother's grave; if the house were bare when I receive it, still

I should inherit your book of debts.

MOTHER. There is no law that requires it.

BRAND. Not one written with pen and ink; but in the heart of every dutiful son another law is branded—and this law demands satisfaction to the full. Oh, blind woman! will you not learn to see? You have clipt God's coinage upon earth, you have squandered the soil He lent you, you have covered the image wherein you were born with the mire of sin; the soul which once was winged you have left with shorn wings in the mud. That is your debt. Whither will you go, when the Lord demands His own again?

MOTHER. [*Timidly.*] Whither shall I go? whither? shall I go? whither?

BRAND. Fear not; your son takes all your debts upon him. The image of God which you have stained shall rise again in me, washed by the Will; only depart to the dead in faith. My mother shall not sleep in debtors' bonds; I wipe off the debt.

MOTHER. The debt and the guilt?

BRAND. The debt; only that, mark my words well. Your soul's debt will your son wipe off, but for your sin you must answer yourself. The whole sum of humanity wasted in slavish toil can be paid to the uttermost farthing by the intention of another; but for the wasting of it, that is the guilt—for *that* there must be repentance, or death!

MOTHER. [*Anxiously.*] I had better get home to my shelter under the edge of the brae. Here, in this sultry, glaring sunlight, thoughts spring up like poisonous weeds; one grows almost faint with the stench of them.

BRAND. Seek your shadows; I am near you. And when you are draw towards light and heaven, and desi to see me, then send me word, and will come.

MOTHER. Yes—with your judgment

BRAND. No; I will come in all affe tion, as a son—in all gentleness, as priest. I will defend you against t breath of horror; I will stand at t foot of your bed and cool the burnin in your blood with words of comfor

MOTHER. Will you pledge your wor to it? Will you give me your han upon it?

BRAND. I will come at the moment your repentance. [*He goes nearer her.*] But I, like you, make a cond tion. Of your own free will you mu cast off everything that now binds yo to earth, and go to your grave nake

MOTHER. [*striking at him wildly.* Bid fire forsake its heat and snow i frost; bid the sea cast off its wetnes Abate your price!

BRAND. Cast a child from a bo in mid fjord, and then pray God t bless the deed.

MOTHER. Ask some other penanc ask fasting from food and drink, b not what is to me the greatest of all!

BRAND. If you still shrink from t greatest, all the rest will not mitiga His judgment.

MOTHER. I will put silver in t alms-box!

BRAND. All you have?

MOTHER. Son, is not *much* enough

BRAND. For you there is no wor of penance, until you die, like Jo on a heap of ashes.

MOTHER. [*Wringing her hands.*] M life wasted and my soul cast out; little while and my goods squandere I will go home then, and clasp clo

my bosom everything that can be
ll called *mine*. My treasure, child of
in, my treasure, for thee I tore my
east until it bled; now I will go
me and weep as a mother weeps by
e cradle over her sick child. Why
s my soul born in the flesh, if the
re of the flesh is the death of the
il? Stay near me, Pastor; I know
t now what mind I may be in at
e dread hour. If I must lose all
ile I live, at least I will wait until
e last! [*She goes.*]

BRAND. [*Looking after her.*] Yes,
ur son shall stay near you, and await
ur summons when the moment of
enting comes; he shall cherish your
l, chill hand, as soon as you stretch
out. [*He goes down to* AGNES.]
e evening is not as the morning was.
en mind and heart were eager for
nflict; afar off I heard the war-song
ng; I longed to swing the sword of
ath, to stamp out lying, to slay
nons, to hem in the world with
elds.

AGNES. [*She has turned round, and
ks up at him joyfully.*] The morn-
was pale beside the evening. Then
onged for lies and play; I longed
gain, to create, that whereof the loss
s gain.

BRAND. Beautiful, ardent dreams
ne in flocks like wild swans and bore
up on their broad wings. I looked
ward and saw that my path lay
re; I was to the time and the gen-
tion the conqueror of guilt, march-
on in my greatness above the clam-
ing flood. The pomp of processions,
nns, incense, silken banners, chal-
s of gold, songs of victory, shouts
exaltation from the multitude, glori-
the work of my life. Everything
lay before me rich and alluring, but it
was all a romance, only a dazzling
glimpse caught on the moorland, half
in sunlight, half in the glare of light-
ning. But now I stay, where darkness
falls long before the day declines. Here
I stay, between Slide and Sound, shut
out from the swarming world, with
only a strip of heaven above me; but I
stand on home ground. My Sunday
song is sung, my winged steed may be
unsaddled; but I can see a greater
goal than tilting with a knight's lance.
I will ennoble the drudgery of daily
toil, the wear and tear of duty, and
make them Sunday work.

AGNES. And that God who was to
fall?

BRAND. He shall fall, nevertheless,
but in secret, hidden and concealed,
not openly before all. I see plainly, I
misinterpreted the remedy for the peo-
ple. No glorious achievement will raise
and reform the race; no awakening
of abundant faculties will mend its
flaws of soul. It is the Will that avails.
The Will acquits or condemns the
Will, whole where all is dispersion,
whole in difficult as in easy things. [*He
turns round towards the valley, where
the shades of evening are beginning to
fall.*] Come then, men, you dull wan-
derers in this rock-bound valley, which
is my home; we will attempt our work
of purification in converse soul to soul;
we will slay half-heartedness, deaden
lying, awaken the young lion of the
Will! The hand on the hoe may tally
with human dignity, as well as the
hand on the sword; the aim of both is
one—to become tables whereon God
can write. [*He is going.* EJNAR *meets
him.*]

EJNAR. Stop, and restore me what

you took!

BRAND. Do you mean her? There she sits.

EJNAR. [*To* AGNES.] Choose between the sunlit upland and this gloomy den of sorrow.

AGNES. I have no choice to make.

EJNAR. Agnes, Agnes, listen to me! Remember the old saying: "Light to lift, heavy to hold."

AGNES. Go, and God be with you, fair tempter; I shall hold on until I fall.

EJNAR. Think of all those who are dear to you.

AGNES. Greet my brothers and sisters, and my mother. I will send them a letter if I can find words.

EJNAR. Out on the smooth waters the white sails skim from the strand; like longings on a dream brow, high prows, sprinkled with pearls of spray, hasten and fly to harbour, far away in a promised land.

AGNES. Sail east or west; think of me as one in the grave.

EJNAR. Agnes, follow me as a sister.

AGNES. [*Shaking her head.*] Between us lies a world-wide sea.

EJNAR. Ah, go home to your mother then.

AGNES. [*Quietly.*] Not from my teacher, my brother, and my friend.

BRAND. [*Coming a step nearer.*] Young woman, weigh it well. Cramped between fell and fell, overshadowed by roof and peak, shut up in the twilight of this ravine, from henceforward my life must flow away like a gloomy October evening.

AGNES. The darkness frightens me no longer; the stars pierce through the clouds.

BRAND. Remember, I am stern in my demand—I require All or nothing. If you fell off by the way, your life would be as though flung into the sea. No margin for haggling in the hour of need, no forgiveness in failure; if life is not sufficient, you must be ready to meet death!

EJNAR. Fly from this wild game! Leave this gloomy man of the Old Law; live the life you know you can!

BRAND. Chose; you stand where the road divides. [*He goes.*]

EJNAR. Choose between storm and calm! The choice between going and staying is the choice between joy and sorrow, between night and morning, between death and life.

AGNES. [*Rising and speaking slowly.*] In to the night. Through death. Behind dawns the glow of morning.

[*She follows where* BRAND *went.* EJNAR *looks after her for awhile as if lost, bows his head, and goes away again towards the fjord.*]

ACT III.

SCENE—*Three years later. A little garden at the parsonage, with a stone fence round it. A high bluff of the fell opposite. In the background lies the fjord, which is narrow and shut in. The house door leads out into the garden. Afternoon.*

BRAND *is standing on the steps before the house.* AGNES *is sitting on the step below him.*

AGNES. My beloved husband, again your eyes travel anxiously over the fjord—

BRAND. I am waiting for a message.

AGNES. You are ill at ease!

BRAND. I am waiting for a message from my mother. I have been three years faithfully waiting for this mes-

re, and it has never come. This morn- I was told for certain that her ur will soon be here.

AGNES. [*Softly and affectionately.*] and, you ought to go *without* a mes- re.

BRAND. [*Shaking his head.*] If she no repentance for her fault, I have word to say, I have no comfort for .

AGNES. She is your mother.

BRAND. I have no right to make ls of my family.

AGNES. Brand, you are hard!

BRAND. To you?

AGNES. Oh, no!

BRAND. I forewarned you our life uld be a path of trial.

AGNES. [*Smiling.*] It has not come e; you have not kept your word.

BRAND. Yes, I have; this place is n and cold; the colour grows pale on your cheek; your tender heart frozen. There is no striving in our se; it stands in the midst of slides steeps.

AGNES. It is all the safer. The e has bulged forwards so much that he thaw, when the leaves sprout, it es out over us, and the parsonage nds unmoved, just as if it stood un- a leaping waterfall.

BRAND. And the sun which never ches us?

AGNES. Why, how mild and warm ances just opposite, on the shoulder he mountain!

BRAND. Yes, for three weeks, in the mer-time; but it never penetrates he foot.

AGNES. [*She looks at him meaning- rises, and says:*] Brand, there is one g which alarms you!

BRAND. No, you!

AGNES. No, you!

BRAND. You are bearing a terrible fear in secret.

AGNES. And you too, Brand!

BRAND. You feel dizzy, as if you were standing on the brink of a precipice! Speak out; tell me everything.

AGNES. I have trembled sometimes— [*She stops.*]

BRAND. You have trembled! who have you trembled for?

AGNES. For Alf.

BRAND. For Alf?

AGNES. And you have, too!

BRAND. Yes, sometimes! But, no, he can't be taken from us. God is good. My little lad, he will grow big and strong some day. Where is he now?

AGNES. He is asleep.

BRAND. [*Looking in through the door.*] Look; he does not dream of sickness or trouble; his little hand is round and plump—

AGNES. But it's pale.

BRAND. Yes, pale; but that will pass off.

AGNES. What a sweet, refreshing sleep!

BRAND. God bless thee! sleep sound. [*He shuts the door.*] With you and him peace and light have descended on all the work of my Call; between you every moment of sorrow, every heavy labour has been light to bear; with you, my courage has never failed, his childish play has given me strength. I accepted my Call as a martyrdom, but look how everything has changed, how success has followed me on my way!

AGNES. Yes, Brand; but you deserve success. Oh! you have fought, and suffered, and striven; you have endured evil; you have toiled and laboured; I know you have wept blood in silence.

BRAND. Ah, well; but everything seemed easy; with you, love entered like the spring sunshine into my heart. I had never known it before; my father and my mother never kindled it: they would rather have quenched the fleeting spark that started here and there out of the ashes. It was as if the whole of the gentleness I had kept silent and concealed had been treasured for a golden halo about him and you, my sweet wife.

AGNES. Not about us alone, but all those who now are members of our home: every son of sorrow, every brother to distress, every child that weeps, every mother that suffers, finds a place for refreshment at the lavish table of your heart.

BRAND. But through you and him. It was you two who built the heavenly bridge, gentleness of spirit. No soul can embrace *all,* unless it has first loved *one.* I was forced to long and yearn until my heart was hardened into stone.

AGNES. And yet—your love is hard; those whom you would caress, you wound.

BRAND. You, Agnes?

AGNES. Me? Oh no, dear; what you made me bear was easy. But many a soul has fallen away from you, before the demand "All or nothing."

BRAND. What the world calls love, I neither know nor want. I know God's love, and that is not weak and mild. That is hard even unto the terror of death; it offers caresses which leave wounds. What did God answer in the olive-grove, when the Son lay sweating in agony, and prayed and prayed: "Let this cup pass from Me"? Did He take the cup of pain from His mouth? No, child; He had to drain it to the depth

AGNES. Measured by this measure the whole flock, every soul on earth is doomed.

BRAND. No man knows whom th sentence covers; but in eternal letter of fire it is written: "Be thou steadfas to the uttermost end of thy trial; th crown of life is not gained by hag gling!" To be bathed in the sweat o anguish is not enough; thou must pas through the fire of torture. That tho *canst* not, may assuredly be forgive thee, but that thou *wilt* not, *never.*

AGNES. Yes, it shall be as you say Oh, raise me, raise me whither you ar rising; lead me towards your loft heavens! I am strong of purpose, bu my courage fails. I am often smi ten with alarm; I seem to grow dizzy and my feet are weary and clogge with earth.

BRAND. Look you, Agnes, for th whole flock there is one demand—"n cowardly compromise." If a man do his work by halves, or does not do thoroughly, he is doomed in the whol This doctrine must be established law, not by teaching, but by practic

AGNES. [*Throwing her arms aroun his neck.*] I will walk where your fe have trod!

BRAND. There is no cliff too stee for *two.*

[*The* DOCTOR *has come down the roa and stops outside the garden fence.*]

DOCTOR. H'm! doves billing and co ing among these dark, desolate hills?

AGNES. My dear old doctor, is th you? Do come in!

[*She runs down and opens the ga den wicket.*]

DOCTOR. Not into *your* house! Y know quite well I am angry. To

chain yourself to such a place!—
re the winter winds and the storms
ss the moorland cut like ice through
, body and soul—!

RAND. Not through the soul.

OCTOR. Not? Ugh! Well, that al-
t seems true. Your hasty compact
ns to stand as firm and fast as ever,
ough one might rather have ex-
ted—according to the old saying,
de in a minute, marred in a min-
"

GNES. The kiss of a sunbeam and
note of a bell can awaken you for
mmer's day.

OCTOR. Farewell; a sick person is
ting for me.

RAND. My mother?

OCTOR. Yes. Are you going the
e way?

RAND. Not now.

OCTOR. Just been there?

RAND. No.

OCTOR. Parson, you're a hard man.
ave trudged over the moorland in
fog and falling snow, although I
w well enough she is one who pays
a pauper.

RAND. May God bless your energy
skill! Ease her hard struggle if
can.

OCTOR. May He bless my good
; as soon as I heard she was in
l, I came.

RAND. She sent you a message; *me*
forgets. I am waiting, and wait-
sick at heart.

OCTOR. Come without a message.

RAND. I recognise no mission there
she summons me.

OCTOR. [*To* AGNES.] You poor,
child, laid in the power of such
hands!

RAND. I am not hard.

AGNES. He would give his own blood if it could cleanse her soul.

BRAND. Because I am her son I have freely taken her debt of sin for my inheritance.

DOCTOR. Pay off your own.

BRAND. In God's sight the offences of many can be paid off by one.

DOCTOR. Not by one himself a beggar, lying up to the ears in debt.

BRAND. Rich or beggar, I *will* with all my might; and this one thing suffices.

DOCTOR. [*Looking fixedly at him.*] Yes, the *quantum satis* of human Will is entered as the inventory of your riches; but your *conto caritatis,* Parson, is a white and virgin page. [*He goes.*]

BRAND. [*Following him for a moment with his eyes.*] No word has been so befouled and belied as the word "love." They lay it with all the wiles of Satan as a veil over the flaws of the Will; with it they artfully conceal that their life is a sham and a mockery. If the path is narrow and steep and slippery, it is cut short—in *love;* if a man walks on the broad road of sin, still there is hope for him—in *love;* if he has seen his goal, and yet has not striven, he yet can conquer—in *love;* if he goes astray, although he knew the right, there is a refuge for him—in *love!*

AGNES. Yes, it is false, and yet I often have to ask myself: "Is it true?"

BRAND. *One* thing is overlooked. *First* the Will must satisfy the Law's thirst for Righteousness. *First* you must *will,* not merely what is possible in great or small, not merely where the action carries with it its complement of pain and trouble—no, you must boldly and

gladly *will* throughout a whole series of horrors. Dying in anguish upon the tree of the cross is not martyrdom; but *this, first: Willing* the death of the cross, *Willing* in the midst of the agony of the flesh, *Willing* in the midst of the anguish of the spirit: *this,* in the *first* place, is taking hold of salvation.

AGNES. [*Clinging close to him.*] When the dread of the demand comes upon me, then talk to me, my brave husband!

BRAND. When the Will has won the victory in a strife like this, *then* comes the time for love; then it descends like a white dove, and brings the olive-leaf of life. But *here* a man's best love towards a slack and slothful generation is Hate! [*In terror.*] Hate! Hate! Willing that single, simple little word means Universal War! [*He goes hastily into the house.*]

AGNES. [*Looking through the open door.*] He is kneeling by the sweet boy, rocking his head as if he were weeping; he is pressing himself against the child's bed, like a man who knows no help nor comfort. Oh, what a wealth of love in this strong, manful soul! He *may* love Alf; the world's serpent has not bitten the child's heel yet. [*She exclaims in terror.*] He springs up wringing his hands! What has he seen? He is as pale as ashes.

BRAND. [*Outside on the steps.*] Has no message come?

AGNES. No, no message.

BRAND. [*Looking back into the house.*] His skin is parched and burning; his pulse beats fast, his temples throb,—oh, do not be frightened, Agnes!

AGNES. O! God, what thoughts—

BRAND. No, only do not be frightened. [*He calls out down the road.*] There, I see the message coming!

MAN. [*through the garden wicket.*] You must come *now,* Father!

BRAND. [*In haste.*] Directly! What message do you bring?

MAN. A sort of message difficult to understand. She was sitting up in her bed, when she bent forward and said, "Go and have the parson fetched; I'll give half my goods for the Sacrament."

BRAND. [*Drawing back.*] *Half!* No! Don't say that!

MAN. [*Shaking his head.*] Then the message wouldn't have been delivered to you honestly, Father.

BRAND. *Half! half!* She meant *all!*

MAN. That may be; but the word was said loud and clear. I don't forget quickly.

BRAND. [*Catching hold of his arm.*] On the day of the Lord, when you are summoned to judgment, dare you bear witness that that was the word?

MAN. Yes.

BRAND. [*Firmly.*] Go and say, "This was the answer sent: 'The priest comes not, nor the sacrament.'"

MAN. [*Looking at him doubtfully.*] You can't have understood me then; it is your mother I come from.

BRAND. I know no different rule for strangers and my own kin.

MAN. They are hard words.

BRAND. She knew the sacrifice must be, "All or nothing."

MAN. Parson!

BRAND. Say, that the least fragment of the golden calf is fully as much an idol as the whole.

MAN. I'll lay on the answer as softly and lightly as ever I can. The consola

n is still left her, that God is not so rd as you. [*He goes.*]

BRAND. Ah, that consolation has eathed out its corpse stench to in- t the world often enough! A judge's uth can easily be buttered with cries flatteries at the hour of need. Nat- ılly! It is suitable it should be so! ey know their man beforehand; they ow well enough from the whole of work that the old man does not nd being haggled with.

[*Along the road the* MAN *has met other* MAN; *they both come back to- her.*]

BRAND. A fresh message?

FIRST MAN. Yes.

BRAND. What do you bring?

SECOND MAN. "Nine-tenths" were words now.

BRAND. Not *all?*

SECOND MAN. Not all.

BRAND. My answer is given: "The est comes not, nor the Sacrament."

SECOND MAN. In her pain and ag- , she begged hard—

FIRST MAN. Parson, remember, she e you birth!

BRAND. [*Clenching his hands.*] I e not use two sets of weights, one my enemies and one for my own .

SECOND MAN. The sick woman is in at and bitter need; come or send ıe words of reconciliation.

BRAND. [*To the* FIRST MAN.] Go; to the sick what I bade you: the rd for the Bread and Wine of ıce must be clean. [*The* MEN *go.*]

AGNES. [*Clinging close to him.*] nd, I am often afraid at what you You flame like the sword of the d.

BRAND. [*With tears in his voice.*] Does not the world stand against me again with emptied scabbard on the hip? Does not it fight my soul to the death, with all its passive, stubborn defiance?

AGNES. It is a hard condition that you have made.

BRAND. Propose an easier one, if you dare to.

AGNES. Measure whom you will by such a measure, and see whether anyone can attain it.

BRAND. No, there you have cause to fear. So perverted, so empty, so flat, so mean, has the whole generation's conception of life become. It is highly esteemed for a man to go so far as to sacrifice his goods by will, in the character of a laudable, anonymous donor. Bid the hero blot out his name and content himself with the gaining of victory; offer emperor and king the same condition, and see what exploits you'll get from them. Bid the poet smuggle his fine birds out of the cage in secret, so that no one may suspect it was he who gave them their notes and their glory of golden feathers! Seek in the green tree or the dry; self-sacrifice is to be found in *none.* A slavish attachment to earth runs through it all. Each man hangs over the wild, sheer abyss, clinging to the branches of this life of dust, and when they fail, he clutches with his nails to the fibres and bast.

AGNES. And yet to a fallen and helpless generation you cry, "All or nothing"!

BRAND. He who will gain the victory must not draw back; from a fall to the depth a man must rise to the height. [*He is silent for a moment; his voice changes.*] And yet when I

stand before the individual soul and put to him the demand that he should rise, I feel as if I were floating on a fragment of wreckage, storm-tossed on the sea. I have wept and suffered agony, I have secretly bitten the tongue wherewith I have reproved. When I raised my arm to strike, I have longed for an embrace!— Go, Agnes, and watch him while he sleeps; sing him into bright dreams; a child's soul is as clear and placid as a tarn in the summer sunshine; a mother can hover over it like the bird which, on its silent flight, mirrors her beauty in its deepest depth.

AGNES. [*Pale.*] What is the matter, Brand? Wherever you direct your thoughts, their shafts fly back to him.

BRAND. Oh, nothing. Watch him carefully and quietly.

AGNES. Give me a motto.

BRAND. A stern one?

AGNES. A mild.

BRAND. [*Embracing her.*] "He that is without fault shall live."

AGNES. [*She looks at him joyfully, and says:*] There is one possession that God dare not ask! [*She goes into the house.*]

BRAND. [*Standing gazing in front of him.*] But if He did dare? The Lord dares do what "the Fear of Isaac" dared do before. [*Shaking off his thoughts.*] No, no; I have offered *my* sacrifice. I renounced my life's Call— to ring like the thunder of the Lord and awake those that sleep upon the earth. Lies! There was no sacrifice in *that;* that failed me when the dream passed away, when Agnes awoke me, and followed to the same work in obscurity. [*He looks out along the road.*] How is it that it lingers—the sick woman's message that she is ready fo sacrifice and a repentance that will u root sin utterly, with its deepest fib and its rankest shoot? Look there— No; it is only the Baillie, well-meanin active, stout and hearty, with his hand in his two pockets, like the branches o each side of a parenthesis.

BAILLIE. [*Through the lattice doo of the garden.*] Good-day! It's n often we see each other, and perha I am come at an unseasonable time?

BRAND. [*Pointing to the house* Step in.

BAILLIE. Thanks; I'm all right her If you'd only welcome my errand, feel perfectly certain it would turn o in the end to everyone's advantage.

BRAND. Name your errand.

BAILLIE. Your mother is hopeless sick, so I understand; I am griev to hear it.

BRAND. I do not doubt it.

BAILLIE. *Very* grieved.

BRAND. Speak out.

BAILLIE. However, she's an o woman. Good Lord! we must all the same way. Well, I happened ju to be going by, so I thought: "It's easy to jump it as to crawl;"—beside several people told me that she a you had been engaged in a family qua rel since you came here.

BRAND. A family quarrel?

BAILLIE. Yes, it's said she keeps firm and tight hold of what she's g You naturally think she goes too f One mustn't forget one's own interes *She* retains undivided possesion of t whole of your patrimony.

BRAND. Undivided possession—y that is true.

BAILLIE. Relations easily get at va ance in this way. Well, as I have re

iable ground for surmising that you awaiting her decease with equanty, I hope you will listen to me with- offence, although, I acknowledge, time is not well chosen.

Brand. Now or later; it is all the ne to me.

Baillie. Well, then, straight to the nt. As soon as over your mother is d, and happily laid in the bosom of ther Earth—which won't be long—u will be rich.

Brand. You think so?

Baillie. *Think?* I'm certain of it. e owns land in every bay as far as u can see with a telescope. You'll rich, Parson!

Brand. In spite of the Court of vision?

Baillie. [*Smiling.*] What has *that* do with it? *That* divides disputed perty, where more than one has an erest in the inheritance and debts; in this case no one's interest is eatened.

Brand. But supposing a co-heir to goods—and the debts—made his pearance, and said: "*I* am the right n"?

Baillie. He could only be the devil iself! Look at me—no one else has vord to say on the subject—trust rely to me; I know my business. w then; you will be well-to-do—u even. You won't want this outhe-way cure any longer; the whole ntry lies open to you.

Brand. Listen to me, Baillie: is not, put it short, the whole pith of your ument this—"go away"?

Baillie. About that, I think it ld be best for all parties. If you examine critically the flock for m you are now the interpreter of the Word, then you will see they are as little in place among us as a wolf among geese and ganders. Understand me fully; you possess powers useful and profitable to a larger society, but even hurtful to one who calls himself "Udalman of the clefts of the rocks and Athling of a deep dale gully."

Brand. His native place is to a man's foot what the root is to the tree; if need for his work lies not there, his deeds are doomed and his tale is told.

Baillie. The first condition to all achievement is that it should be suited to the demands of the country.

Brand. But the demands of the country can be seen best from the heights, not from the corner of a fell-bound Commune.

Baillie. That is talk fit for large societies, not for people in poor valleys.

Brand. Oh, you, with your boundaries and distinctions between lowland and fell! You claim the rights of world-wide empires, while you shirk every duty to society; you think in your cowardice to escape them by wailing: "We are only small folk!"

Baillie. Everything has its own time, and every time its own work, every generation its own task to perform. *Our* Commune also has cast its mite into the cash-box of the world's great aims and ends; of course that was a long time ago; but the mite was not such a very tiny one. True, the place now is small and empty, yet its fame still lives in legend. The days of its vanished greatness were contemporary with the age of King Bele. Many a tale is still told of the two brothers Ulf and Thor, and scores of

gallant men who went a-harrying to the coast of Britain, and plundered to their heart's content. The southerners shrieked, frozen with terror: "God deliver us from the hands of the evil ones." And these "evil ones" were, in spite of all doubt, men from here. Ha! those fellows knew how to take vengeance, and deal destruction on their incendiary expeditions. Yes, the legend still gives the name of a hero of the Lord who took the cross; however, it is not mentioned that he ever started.

BRAND. There are, no doubt, a whole troop of people descended from this man of promises?

BAILLIE. Certainly; but how do you know?

BRAND. Oh! because it seems to me the family can be recognised in our heroes of promises now; their cross-taking is of the same sort.

BAILLIE. Yes, the family survives at the present time. But we were talking of King Bele's time! First, then, we fought abroad. Then, we visited the lands of our neighbours and kinsmen with the edge of the axe; we trampled their crops under foot, scorched the church-spires and the walls of their dwellings, and wove ourselves a garland of great deeds. Perhaps a trifle too much boasting has been made of all the blood thus spilt. Still, after what I have said, I think I may venture, in all modesty, to point to our power in mighty times long gone by, and to maintain that this Commune has contributed its mite both with fire and sword, to the great end—the world's progress.

BRAND. Yet it seems to me as if you were not acting up to the motto, "Noblesse oblige," as if with your hoe and plough and harrow you were ploughing up King Bele's inheritance.

BAILLIE. By no means. Only vi the social gatherings of the parish, which I and the Constable, the Pari Clerk and the Judge, are the leadi members, and you'll soon see when t punch comes in that King Bele's me ory is not dead. In the clinking glasses, in toasts, and songs, a yarns, and anecdotes, he is still reme bered and brought to life again. I ha often felt myself a deep-seated i pulse to weave about him my thread thought into some flowery fabric, a have raised the minds of many of t natives. I am rather fond of a litt poetry; all the people in this Co mune are at bottom—but everythi in moderation!—one must never guided by it in life—only betwe seven and ten o'clock in the evenin when people are free, and one is tir with one's day's work, and may w need an elevating bath. The diffe ence between us and you is, that y want to plough and fight, with your might and main at the same tim

As far as I can see, this is *your* n tion—battle for God and the cultiv tion of potatoes, reduced at last to intimate a union as that of charco sulphur and saltpetre in the maki of gunpowder.

BRAND. Something like it.

BAILLIE. But *here* such a thing impracticable. In a large society t thing would be worth listening to; to one with your lofty demand, a leave us to plough our bogs and seas.

BRAND. First of all plough dow into the sea your boasts about yo noble ancestors. A dwarf will nev

ow to man's stature, even if Goliath as his grandfather.

BAILLIE. But there is growth lying great memories.

BRAND. When *memory* is bound up th *life;* but *you,* out of the empty irn of memories, have built a stalk- g horse for sloth.

BAILLIE. I end as I began: it would best if you went away from here. ere your work will not flourish; your eal of life will never be compre- nded here. Whatever little flights ay be necessary, such elevation as ay from time to time be suitable to en of toil, of these I will take un- eatied charge. There are gratify- g evidences existing of my dili- nce throughout my official career. rough me, the number of the popu- ion has been doubled—even in- eased almost in the ratio of three one, for I have secured to the place w one, and now another, means of elihood. We have advanced like am in our struggle with natural ob- cles; we have cut a road here, and lt a bridge there—

BRAND. But not one between life l religion.

BAILLIE. —between the fjord and snow-fields.

BRAND. Not between action and idea.

BAILLIE. First, roads between one trict and another, and communica- n between men and men:—there was y one opinion about that before you ne to be Parson of the parish. *Now* have confused everything together, dark lantern with the northern nts. Who can see in a cross-light this what is right and what is ong, what is an improvement and at a mistake. You have thrown all relation into confusion; you have split up into hostile camps a flock which should triumph, united.

BRAND. However, in spite of what you say, here I shall remain. A man does not *choose* the scene of his work. The man who knows his goal and wills to reach it, has *felt* the Call of God written in letters of fire: "*This* is thy place."

BAILLIE. Stay, then, but keep within your own borders. I'm glad enough for you to cleanse the people of the crime and vice that are rife among them. God knows that's wanted often enough! Only don't go and make holy days of the six working days—and don't hoist the flag as if the Lord were on board every sloop that crosses our fjord.

BRAND. For your advice to profit me, I should have to change my soul and its ideal. But the Call is to be *oneself*—to bear one's own cause to victory; and I will carry out my own cause so that it shall shine as a light about my home! The people that all you troop of pilots have lulled asleep shall be awakened. You have tortured its remnant of mountain nature long enough in your narrow cage. Every man comes out low and dejected from your fasting-cure "pettiness." You have drained out his best blood. You have scooped out the marrow of his courage. You have pounded every soul of them into little fragments, when they should stand firm, founded metal; but the cry of uprising may yet thunder in your ears—"War!"

BAILLIE. War?

BRAND. *War!*

BAILLIE. If you give the call to arms you'll be the first to fall.

BRAND. One day it will be clearly manifest that the greatest victory is defeat!

BAILLIE. Consider, Brand; you stand where the road divides. Don't stake your all on one card.

BRAND. That I *shall* do.

BAILLIE. Lose the game, and your life on earth is wasted. You have all the good things of the world. You are heir to a rich mother, you have a child to live for, and a wife you love; the conditions of happiness are, as it were, held out to you with favouring hands.

BRAND. And if for all that I turn my back upon what you call the conditions of happiness—if I *must?*

BAILLIE. If you declare your universal war in this out-of-the-way creek, all is lost. Move towards the south, to richer shores, where men can stand with uplifted brows; there you have a right to call an assembly, and bid the people give their blood. *Our* offering is not blood, but the sweat of our struggle for bread among these rocky steeps.

BRAND. Here I stay. This is my home, and in my home shall my war begin.

BAILLIE. Remember what you lose if it fails, and remember first and foremost what you are letting slip!

BRAND. If I yield, I lose myself.

BAILLIE. Brand, he fights forlorn who fights alone.

BRAND. My flock is strong; I have the best with me.

BAILLIE. [*With a smile.*] Yes, possibly; but I have the most. [*He goes.*]

BRAND. [*Looking after him.*] There goes a thorough-bred man of the people, well-meaning, upright, active in his own way, warm-hearted and just, and yet a scourge to his country. No landslip, flood, or hurricane, no famine, frost, or pestilence, does half the destruction a man like that does any day in the year. A plague can only destroy lives, but he— How many a thought is split up, how many a vigorous will is dulled, how many a bold cry is deadened, by a contracted, narrow-minded soul like that! How many a smile upon the people's mouth, how many a gleam of light in the people's breast, how many a joyful, wrathful impulse to uprising—that might have developed into action—has he not killed without blood! [*Suddenly, and anxiously.*] But the message—the message! No one comes! Ah, there is the doctor. [*He hurries to meet him.*] Speak, speak! My mother?

DOCTOR. She stands before her Judge.

BRAND. Dead! But repentant?

DOCTOR. I can hardly think that. She clung to her worldly goods till the hour struck, and she was parted from them.

BRAND. [*Looking straight before him, greatly affected.*] Is this the throwing away of an erring soul?

DOCTOR. It may be she will be gently judged, not according to the law, but according to her light.

BRAND. [*In an undertone.*] What did she say?

DOCTOR. She murmured low, "The hand of God is not so heavy as my son!"

BRAND. [*Sinking in agony upon the bench*]. In the anguish of guilt, on the bed of death, the same lie killing every soul. [*He hides his face in his hands.*]

DOCTOR [*He goes nearer, looks at him, and shakes his head.*] You want to

ring back in every detail a time that as passed away. You believe that ie ancient bond of the law still binds od and man; but every generation as its own character. *Ours* is not to e scared with flaming rods, and urses' tales of stolen souls; *its* first ommandment is: "Be humane!"

BRAND. [*Looking up.*] Humane! h, that slack word is the war-cry f the whole world! With that every rry creature covers himself, so that e dare not, *will* not, *act*. With *that* very chicken heart shields himself om risking his all for victory. Under ver of *that*, every poor wretch's romise is cravenly repented and ghtly broken. You manikin souls! ou will end by turning Humanity to humanitarians! Was God hu-ane to Jesus Christ? If *your* God ad wrought his counsel then, He ould have cried out for mercy under e cross, and the work of Redemp-on might easily have been accom-ished by a diplomatic note from aven!

[*He hides his head, and sits still in mb grief.*]

DOCTOR. [*Quietly.*] Spend your ief out, you stormy soul! It would best for you if you could find tears.

AGNES. [*She has come out upon the eps; she is pale, and whispers in rror to the* DOCTOR:] Come in here! llow me!

DOCTOR. You frighten me! What is child?

AGNES. A fear has wound itself like old worm about my heart—

DOCTOR. What is it?

AGNES. [*Leading him with her.*] me! Eternal power of God!

[*They go into the house;* BRAND *does not observe it.*]

BRAND. [*Quietly, as if to himself.*] Dead, unrepentant; dead as she lived! Is not this the finger of God? Through me shall be regained the treasure she has forfeited? Woe to me, now, ten-fold, if I failed. [*He stands up.*] From this moment I will fight without flinching, on my native ground, as a man chosen for the cross, that through my filial duty the soul may triumph in the fall of the flesh. God has stretched out to me the sword of His tongue; He has kindled in me the pyre of His wrath. Now I stand in the strength of my Will—now I dare, now I can, crush these fells!

DOCTOR. [*He comes out hurriedly down the steps, followed by Agnes, and calls out:*] Set your house in order and leave this place.

BRAND. If the earth shook under me I should still remain!

DOCTOR. Then your child is doomed to die.

BRAND. [*Bewildered.*] Alf! the child Alf! What shadow of horror is this? My child! [*He is going into the house.*]

DOCTOR. [*Detaining him.*] No, wait. —There is no light nor sun here; the air is as biting as a blast from the pole; the fog sinks chilly over you; one winter more in this place will wither up his tender life. Travel, Brand, and your child is saved; but do it quickly—to-morrow, if possible.

BRAND. This evening, this day, this moment! Oh, he shall grow strong and healthy. No blasts from the brae, no biting winds from the shore, shall any longer freeze his little breast. Come, Agnes, lift him up gently in his sleep! Let us fly, fly along the Sounds! Oh,

Agnes, Agnes! the web of death is spinning about our little one.

AGNES. I had a secret foreboding, I trembled in silence—and yet I only half saw the danger.

BRAND. [*To the* DOCTOR.] But flight will save him? You promise that!

DOCTOR. The life a father watches over day and night is sure of victory. Be everything to him, and you will soon see him in the bloom of health; —and do not feed your fear.

BRAND. Thank you, thank you! [*To* AGNES.] Wrap him up close in down; the evening wind is sweeping over the fjord. [AGNES *goes into the house.*]

DOCTOR. *He contemplates* BRAND *in silence.* BRAND *stands motionless, gazing through the door into the house. The* DOCTOR *goes up to him, lays his hand on his shoulder, and says:*] So inflexible to your worldly flock and so lenient to yourself! For *them* there is no question of *little* or *much*,—only the Law's "All or nothing"; but against self, courage fails the moment the lot has fallen, and the lamb for sacrifice is one's own.

BRAND. What do you mean?

DOCTOR. You thundered against your mother the hard words of the Law: "If thou puttest not everything from thee, if thou goest not to the grave naked, thou art lost!" And the same cry has sounded again and again when the People has suffered most grievously. Now you are yourself the shipwrecked man, on the bottom of your boat in the storm of fate. Now you cast into the sea off the upturned keel all your treatises about the pit of Punishment—overboard goes the heavy book wherewith you wounded your brothers' breasts; now all you think of is to save the life o your own offspring in a stiff breeze Away you go, away over fjord an creek—away from your own mother' corpse—away from your ghostly floc and your Call! Now the parson post pones the Mass!

BRAND [*Clutching wildly at hi head as if to collect his thoughts.* *Am* I blind now? or *was* I blin before?

DOCTOR. You are doing as a fathe ought. Do you think I blame what yo are doing? To my mind you are great er with your wings clipt, than before in all your strength. Farewell! Nov that I have held you out the mirror look in it and sigh, "Good Lord, s looks a hurricane." [*He goes away.*

BRAND. [*He stares for a moment be fore him, and suddenly exclaims:* *Now* or *before*—if the fall were *now*

[AGNES *comes out at the door wit a cloak over her shoulders and th child in her arms;* BRAND *does not se her; she is going to speak, but stop terror-struck when she observes th expression of his face. At the same moment a* MAN *comes in haste through the garden-wicket. The sun is setting.*]

MAN. Listen, Parson, you have a enemy!

BRAND. [*Clenching his hand against his breast.*] Yes, *here.*

MAN. Stand on your guard against the Baillie. The seed you sowed wa flourishing over the land, until he scorched it with the blight of his ru mours. He has often already hinte that the parsonage would soon b empty; he said that you would tur your back on us as soon as your rich mother was dead.

BRAND. And if it was—

MAN. Parson, I know you, and I ow why these venomous words were tered; you stand in the way of him d his doings, he could never bend ur will; look you, that's the real ot of the rumour.

BRAND. [*Hesitatingly.*] Suppose at is said were true?

MAN. Then you lied shamefully be- re us all.

BRAND. Have I—?

MAN. How many times have you not id that God Himself awakened you r the strife,—that your home is ong us,—that your war shall issue rth from *here,*—that no man dare rk his Call,—that a man must fight t never yield! And you *have* the ll! Your fire has kindled strong and ght in many a breast.

BRAND. Man, in this place the peo- 's ears are deaf; almost every heart stupefied and has its fire put out!

MAN. You know better; now the nshine of Heaven gleams in many neart.

BRAND. It is still night in tenfold re.

MAN. You are set as a light in the ht. But let that be as it will, there no need of counting; for here stand the one man, and say: "Travel, if so you can! *I* have a soul as much as yone. I cannot help myself with the k; you have drawn me up out of deep—try whether you dare let go r hold now! You cannot do it, I l hold fast, my soul would be lost the hold broke! Farewell! I wait news with confidence; my priest l not lose hold of me—and God. *e goes.*]

AGNES. [*Shyly.*] Your cheek is ite, and your mouth is pale; it is as if you were crying aloud in your heart.

BRAND. Every word spoken against the wall of the mountain is full of sound, and wounds me with the force of a tenfold echo.

AGNES. [*Going a step further.*] I am ready!

BRAND. Ready? What for?

AGNES. [*Boldly.*] For what a mother must and will!

[GERD *is running by along the road and stops at the garden-wicket.*]

GERD. [*Clapping her hands and calling out in wild glee:*] Have you heard? The Parson's on the wing! Out of the mounds, up from the hillocks swarm the Trolls and the Drows, black and ugly, little and big.—Ugh, how sharp they can strike!—They almost tore out my eye; they have taken half my soul.—Well, I can make shift with the rest; there's enough of the old hulk left.

BRAND. Girl, your thoughts are wild and wandering; I am here standing before you.

GERD. You? Yes, you, but not the Parson! My hawk swept down swift from Svartetind over the mountain side—bridled, saddled, wild and wrathful, hissing in the blast as the night fell, and on his back rode a man—it was the Parson, I say, the Parson! Now the parish church stands empty, shut with bolt and bar. The ugly church's time is over; now *mine* shall come to honour. There stands the Parson, great and strong, in his white Mass-cloak, woven of winter's drip and damp—if you wish to be there too, come. The parish church is empty. My priest can speak words that ring throughout the world!

BRAND. You poor, stricken soul, who

bade you bewilder me with tales of heathen idols?

GERD. [*Coming inside the garden-wicket.*] An idol? What sort of a thing is that? An idol? Ah! I know well; sometimes great and sometimes small; always gilded, always coloured. An idol! Listen! D'you see her? Can you distinguish under the covering a child's hand and a child's legs? Can you see what a fine, coloured cloth is wrapped round something, looking like a child asleep? She draws back timidly—she covers it over! An idol? Man, you can see one *there!*

AGNES. [*To* BRAND.] Can you find tears—can you find prayers? The terror has burned mine out.

BRAND. Agnes, wife— I foresee sorrow. One greater than her has sent her.

GERD. Listen! Now all the bells on the wild ridge are ringing together! Look! Look what a crowd of people are flocking towards the church. Can you see the thousands of Trolls that the Parson of the parish sunk in the sea? Can you see the thousands of Dwarfs? Until now they lay buried with his seal to keep their graves. Sea and grave cannot hold them. They swarm forth, clammy and cold. I see troll children—only dead skin deep—grinning, and rolling the sliding stones off them. Listen! They screech "Mother!" and "Father!" Men and women answer. The men of the parish walk each among his own imps, like a father amid a troop of sons; the women of the parish take their dead, and give them their breasts to feed from; they never strutted so proudly before when they took their children to be christened. Life came hither when the Parson went on his travels.

BRAND. Go from me! I begin to see worse visions—

GERD. Listen. He laughs, he who is sitting there by the roadside, where it bends upward towards the ridge; he is writing down in his book every soul which has gone upwards. Heigh! he has them almost all; the parish church stands empty, shut with bolt and bar, —and the Parson flies off on the hawk's back!

[*She springs over the garden fence and is lost among the stone-heaps. Silence.*]

AGNES. [*Approaches, and says in an undertone:*] Let us go; it is time now.

BRAND. [*Gazing at her.*] Which way? [*He points first to the garden-wicket, and then to the house door.*] This way?—or this?

AGNES. [*Drawing back aghast.*] Brand, your child? your child!

BRAND. [*Following her.*] Answer; was I a priest before I became a father?

AGNES. [*Shrinking still further back.*] If I were asked in a thunder-clap, in this matter I could answer nothing.

BRAND. [*Still following her.*] You shall answer; you are the mother; here *you* have the last word!

AGNES. I am the wife; if you dare to bid me, I shall bow myself and hearken!

BRAND. [*Trying to take hold of her arm.*] Take from me the chalice of the Choice.

AGNES. [*Drawing back behind a tree.*] Then, I have never been a mother!

BRAND. There is judgment in that nswer.

AGNES. [*Boldly.*] Ask yourself, if ou *have* a choice!

BRAND. Then, the judgment sounded ith a more certain sound.

AGNES. Do you believe fully in the ord's Call?

BRAND. Yes [*seizing her tight by the and*]. And now you shall say the word r life or death!

AGNES. Go that way your God bade ou! [*A pause.*]

BRAND. Let us go; it is time now.

AGNES. [*Below her breath.*] Whither oes the road lead? [BRAND *is silent.*]

AGNES. [*Points to the garden-wicket, nd asks:*] This way?

BRAND. [*Pointing to the house door.*] o—this way.

AGNES. [*Lifting up the child on high her arms.*] O God! this sacrifice that hou darest to ask I dare to lift up to hy heaven! Lead me through the errors of Life.

[*She goes into the house.*]

BRAND. [*He stares into vacancy for moment, and then bursts into tears; en he clasps his hands together over s head; throws himself down on the eps, and cries:*] Jesus, Jesus, give me ght!

ACT IV.

SCENE—*The Parsonage on Christ- as Eve. The room is dark. On the rthest wall is the house door; in one the side-walls is a window, and in e other a door.* AGNES *is standing at e window dressed in black, gazing t into the darkness.*

AGNES. Not yet! not yet! Oh, how rd it is to wait—to lift up cry after y of yearning—never to get any answer! The snow is falling thick and soft. It looks as if it had covered the roof of the old church with a linen hood. [*Listening.*] Hush! I can hear the creaking of the wicket. A footstep —a quick, man's step! [*She hastens to the door and opens it.*] Is it you? Come in, come in!

[BRAND *comes in covered with snow; he is dressed in his travelling clothes, which he takes off during what follows.*]

AGNES. [*Throwing her arms around him.*] Oh, how long you have been away! Do not go away—do not go away from me. I cannot shake off the shadows of night, alone. What a night! and what days these two days and this night have been!

BRAND. Child, you have got me back again now. [*He lights a single candle, which casts a faint light over the room.*] You are pale.

AGNES. And tired and weak. I have longed and watched and yearned. And then I bound a few evergreens together —just a few, but it was all I had. I have tended them ever since the summer-time to deck the Christmas-tree. I used to call the bush his; and he had it—for a garland! [*She bursts into tears.*] Look, now it is half covered with snow—in—O God!—

BRAND. In the churchyard.

AGNES. Oh, that word!

BRAND. Dry your tears.

AGNES. I will—only be patient—my soul still seems to be bleeding, the wound is so fresh and new; the course of my strength has run out. Oh, but it will be better soon. When I have got through these days, you shall never see me complaining.

BRAND. Is *this* keeping the Lord's feast?

AGNES. No, I know. But be patient! Think! last year so healthy and strong, and this year carried away from me—carried out— [*She shrings from the word.*]

BRAND. [*Sternly.*] To the churchyard!

AGNES. [*Screaming.*] Don't say the word!

BRAND. It must be said—and aloud—if you dread it! It must be said so loud as to roar like a wave against the beach.

AGNES. You suffer under the word yourself more than you like to own; I can see on your forehead the trace of the sweat which you pay for it.

BRAND. The drops of moisture upon my forehead are only the spray from the waters of the fjord.

AGNES. And the drop in your eye, is that, too, a melted snowflake from above? No, no, it is too warm; its spring is your own breast.

BRAND. Agnes, my wife, let us be strong and endure; let us lay our strength together and win our way step by step. Ah! out there I was a man. The sea washed over the skerries, the seamews were silent for the terror of the storm, the hail scourged my poor little craft; we lay in mid fjord, the water seethed, mast and tackle clashed and hissed, the sail was slit into rags, and blew far away to leeward before the roar of the waves; every nail in the boat creaked; slides were falling on both sides from steep and slope; eight men sat with still oars like eight corpses on their biers. As I sat at the helm, I grew in power, I was the man to command; I knew well that One Great baptized me to a Calling purchased at a great price.

AGNES. It is easy to stand fast in the storm, to live the life of conflict but think of me sitting still, amid the sparrow twitterings of my sorrow—me, who cannot deaden time if I will ever so much; think of me who am debarred from the strife, and catch no glimmer from the fire of action; think of me, who only have a little narrow work to do; think of me; I sit at home, I dare not remember, and I cannot forget!

BRAND. Have you only a little work? It was never so great as it is now! Listen; I will tell you something that has come to me in our sorrow. My eyes are often clouded, my thoughts cast down, my mind unnerved; there seems a pleasure to me in being able to weep and weep. Agnes, *think*—*then* I see God near, as I never saw Him before; oh, so near, that it looks as if it would be easy to reach Him. And I thirst to cast myself, as one found, upon His breast, to be close embraced with those strong, loving, fatherly arms.

AGNES. Brand, oh, see Him always so, as the God you have the power to reach—more like a father, less like a master.

BRAND. Agnes, how dare you block the way for His own work; I must see Him great and strong, great as the heavens—the times demand it just because they themselves are little. But *you* can see Him near, look upon Him as a dear Father, bow your head upon His bosom and rest—rest when you are tired. You can come from Him healed and light of heart, with His reflection in your eyes; you can bring

ne radiance of His glory with you
own to me, when I have suffered and
triven. Look you, Agnes, to share
ke this is the very pith of wedlock—
ne is to strive, and storm, and de-
end, the other to heal every mortal
vound; then only can it be truly said
These two are one." Ever since you
urned your back for ever on the life
f the world, and became my wife, and
oldly cast the dice of your destiny,
is Call has rested upon you. I must
ght on till victory or defeat; I must
ght by day under the scorching sun-
eams, and stand on the watch through
ne cold night; you must hold out to
e the full, refreshing chalices of Love,
nd wind the cloak of kindness warm
eneath my breastplate—this is no lit-
e work.

AGNES. Every work, sought after, is
oo heavy for my strength. The thou-
nd branches of my thoughts are all
vined together into one. Everything
ill seems mere phantasy. Let me com-
lain, let me weep; help me so to set
order myself and my duty. Brand,
st night, while you were away, *he*
me into my room. His cheeks were
diant with health. He was clad only
his little petticoat. He tottered on
s baby feet up to the bed where I
y, and stretched out his little arms.
e called his mother and smiled—but
if he were asking for warmth! Yes,
saw it! Oh, I shivered—!

BRAND. Agnes!

AGNES. Yes, I tell you. The child
as freezing! Ah, and that he must
out there on his cold pillow of shav-
gs!

BRAND. The corpse lies under the
ow; the *child* has been carried to
aven.

AGNES. [*Shrinking from him.*] Oh, why do you tear open the wound? It is horrible, in the quick of the anguish! What you call "the corpse," so sternly, is for me *our child* still. The soul and the body fall together; I still have not the strength that you have to discriminate between the two; both are the whole for me. Alf who is sleeping beneath the snow, is my Alf up there.

BRAND. Many a wound must be probed till it bleeds before you are cured of your sickness.

AGNES. Yes, but only be patient—I can be led, not driven. Stand by me and strengthen me, Brand; speak as gently as you can. You who speak with the voice of the storm at those great moments when a soul is about to draw a blank for the crown of its life—have you no note of kindness to deaden the wildness of the pain? Have you no word of refreshment, none to point to the day? God, Whom you taught me to know, is a king in His city; how dare I turn to Him with my petty mother's sorrow?

BRAND. Do you think you could have turned better to the God you knew before?

AGNES. Never thither, never again! And yet there are times when I am drawn by my longing thither—where the light and where the day are. "Light to lift, heavy to hold"; did not the old saying run so? Your realms are too great; everything here is too great for me—you, your Call, your course, your goal, all your Will, your every path, the fell that hangs over us, the fjord that bars the way before our feet, sorrow, memory, darkness, striving—only the church is too little.

BRAND. [*Impressed.*] The church?

That thought again! Is it in the air of this country? Why too little?

AGNES. [*Shaking her head sorrowfully.*] Can I gather all the reasons together, reasonably? Does not a current of feeling come like a scent on a current of wind? Whence does it come? Whither does it go? It is enough for me that I understand it, and I know, without knowledge, the church is too small for me!

BRAND. There is vision in the people's dream. Hundreds of souls that I have met have given birth of themselves to the same thought. Even she whom I met raving wildly on the moorland, was possessed with it. "It is ugly, for it is small," were her words; neither could she reason out the thought. Hundreds of women have said since: "The parish church is too little!" This cry from the women's mouths expresses the craving for a palace— Agnes!—oh I see it plainly —you are the woman the Lord chose as His angel on my path. You are sure and certain to find the right road blindfold, where I pass by the turning.

Will-o'-the-wisp never misled you. The first day, you pointed straight to the realms of true creation. You stopped me when I would have risen in my flight to the height of heaven; you directed my gaze inward to mine own inner self. Agnes, again you have said a word that has struck with the force of lightning—you have brought me whither I was toiling uncertainly; you have cast a gleam of daylight on my work. Our Lord's Church is little. Well, it shall be built again, great! I never saw so clearly as now what my Maker gave me in you—so, like you, I entreat: "Do not go away, do not go away from me!"

AGNES. I will shake off my sorrow; I will dry my tears; I will bar up the castle of my memories, as befits a grave; I will lay the sea of oblivion wide between it and me; I will wipe out the brightness from the little world that I had pictured; I will be wholly wife to you!

BRAND. Our road leads to a great goal.

AGNES. Oh, but do not be stern and *goad* me on.

BRAND. One Greater than I commands by my mouth.

AGNES. One of Whom you said yourself, that He does not reject the Will, although it lacks the power of fulfillment. [*She is going.*]

BRAND. Where are you going to, Agnes?

AGNES. [*Smiling.*] I must not forget the housekeeping—least of all tonight. Last Christmas, don't you remember, you said I was extravagant. Tapers were lit in all the candlesticks, there were evergreens, and pretty things, and toys on the Christmas tree, and we had songs and games. All the tapers shall be lit again this year, Brand, so that we may know it is the festival; we will make it look as bright as we can for the great calm feast. If God should peep into the room, He shall see a chastened daughter, a chastized son, with humble minds—obedient children, who know and understand that they must not at once thrust gladness from them because of the Father's wrath. Now, do you see any trace of tears?

BRAND. [*Drawing her close to him and then letting her go again.*] Child,

ght the tapers; that is your business!

AGNES. [*Smiling sorrowfully.*] Do ou then build your great church; but et it raised before the Spring.

[*She goes.*]

BRAND. [*Looking after her.*] Will- ng, willing in the midst of her afflic- ion, willing in the midst of the fire of nartyrdom; if her strength falters, if er spirit fails, it is so, *in spite* of her eing ready for the Sacrifice. O Lord, elp with Thy strength; take from me he chalice, the bitterest chalice of Thy nission—to be forced to fly the cruel awk and falcon of the Law over her, hat they may drink her heart's full lowing flood. I have strength, I have ourage; lay on me a double portion of 'hy load; only to her be tender- earted!

A knock is heard at the door. Enter he BAILLIE.

BAILLIE. A vanquished man is ome to visit you.

BRAND. A vanquished man?

BAILLIE. I come as such. You prob- bly remember, last summer when I anted to drive you away, I rophesied you wouldn't exactly get ie *best* of it in the struggle between s—

BRAND. Well?

BAILLIE. In spite of my having the ght, I'm not going to contend with ou any longer.

BRAND. Why?

BAILLIE. Because *you* have the ajority.

BRAND. Have I?

BAILLIE. I believe you're aware of at; people come to see you even from ar away. A spirit has come into the ommune, especially lately, which, God ust know, is none of mine, so I venture to conclude it comes from *you.* Here's my hand, and an end to our quarrel!

BRAND. A war like ours can have no ending even when the resistance of one of us is crushed.

BAILLIE. What further ending is there to a war than peace and a friend- ly reconciliation? I am not a man to kick against the pricks. One's made like the ordinary run of people; when one feels the point of the enemy's weapon at one's breast, one knocks un- der. If a man has only got a cudgel against a spear, he must quit the field betimes, and if he has to fight alone, the wisest thing he can do is to yield.

BRAND. It seems to me there are two things to note in this. First, that you call me the stronger; I have the majority—

BAILLIE. Certainly.

BRAND. Possibly as *yet;* but at the last, on the great and solemn day of sacrifice—for whose cause will the Powers be then?

BAILLIE. On the day of sacrifice? But, good Lord! it is just *that* that doesn't come! If the worst comes to the worst, the sacrifice amounts to loosening good people's purses. The times are humanitarian; they demand no sacrifice of any more costly material. And the most vexatious part of it all is, that I myself am among those who pushed forward human- itarian ideas, and thus hindered the day of sacrifice. So one may say in one sense, that I have given myself away; at all events, that I have tied up a rod for the object of my own life's work.

BRAND. It may possibly be that you are right. But as to the other point, I

can scarcely understand how you dare to give in. Rod or no rod, a man is made for his own work, his goal is his Paradise! If an ocean rose between him and it, while Satan's land lay close to him, has he any right to cry: "I can't be troubled with it—this is the shortest way, the way to hell"?

BAILLIE. To that I answer both "yes" and "no;" in some cases a man *must* put into port. If men see they can get no gain for their trouble, who will go on a bootless journey? This is how it stands; we want compensation whether the work has been little or great. If a man can't conquer by fighting, then he must gain his point by diplomacy.

BRAND. But black can never become white.

BAILLIE. My good friend, it's not much good to call a thing as white as the brae, when the crowd shout, "black as snow"!

BRAND. You perhaps shout with them?

BAILLIE. Well, well! I shout—not "black," but "gray." The times are humanitarian, people must meet half way and not rush plump at one another. Remember, this is a free country; *everyone's* opinion is what has weight here. Then, what right has *one* to pronounce his own individual judgment about black and white, in the teeth of *everyone?* To put it shortly, as you have the majority with you, you're the first man in your calling. So then I give in to you, like all the rest, to the best of my ability, and hope no one will blame me for not carrying on the feud to the last. People now look upon my work as trivial and petty, *that* I can see well enough. There is something they consider more necessary than to go on year after year increasing the crops. They're not willing now, as they used to be, to pay their mite where they ought, and if the game isn't carried on with a will, an undertaking has a poor chance of success. It seems hard, you may imagine, to give up plans for roads and bridges, for draining fens and reclaiming beaches, and many other works which were in progress. But, good Lord, what's a man to say? If one can't triumph, one must yield, trust everything to time patiently, and bend prudently aside. *Now* I have lost the favour of the people on the same road on which I gained it; well, well, on another road I shall regain what I had before.

BRAND. Then was it for popularity that you exercised your shrewdness and sagacity?

BAILLIE. No, God knows it wasn't. I have simply and solely desired what was best for the general advantage of the neighbourhood. But there is no denying that there also came into the game a hope of compensation for work well done on working-days. This is how it stands: a hard-working man with natural abilities and a sound understanding wants to see the fruit of his work, and not to go moaning through all the wear and tear for the sake of a mere idea. Even with the best will, I cannot neglect the care of my own welfare and sacrifice all my brains to others. I've got a large family, I've got a wife and a lot of daughters to be provided for first. An idea does not satisfy anyone's hunger nor quench anyone's thirst, when a man has a household like I have; and if anyone ex-

›resses surprise, all I can say is, "He's *bad* father."

BRAND. And *now* your intention is —?

BAILLIE. To build.

BRAND. To *build,* you say?

BAILLIE. Certainly—both for the dvantage of the neighbourhood and ıy own. First, I want to build up the ood repute I was held in not so very ong ago. The *Thing* is drawing very ear, so I must aim at something great, nd start some enterprise, if I'm to emain cock of the walk and prevent ne election of a new one. So *this* is hat I said to myself—"It's a wise ıan who doesn't row against the tream." The people want what is alled now "elevating." That's a useless ame for *me* to play at; I can only elp them on to their legs; but that ıust be done by gentle means, and ere everyone is against me. So you ee I have become ripe for the task of eeking some remedy—if that may be —against the curse of poverty.

BRAND. But do you hope to do way with it?

BAILLIE. Certainly not. It is a ecessary flaw in every society—we ıust put up with that; but with a ttle skill it can be moulded into cer- ain forms and strictly limited, if only e give attention to it in time. We all now that poverty is the best muck for hotbed for crime all over the country. want to dam up this muck.

BRAND. And by what means?

BAILLIE. Ah, can you guess? A eeply-felt want will have been met if can get a pest-house for poverty uilt, for the benefit of the district. es, I say "pest-house," because it will ree us from the contagion of crime. Then I have thought that this building might be conveniently combined with a lock-up; and thus the cause and effect enclosed within the same bolts and bars, with only a wall between one cell and the other. And when I'm once started, then it's my intention to build as well under the same roof a wing that can be used for elections and entertainments, for business matters and also for amusements, with a tribune and an assembly-room—in fact, a smart Politico-Recreation Hall.

BRAND. One is very much wanted especially for the last; but I know one thing which is wanted more.

BAILLIE. Ah, you're thinking of a lunatic asylum? Yes, quite true; that's wanted dreadfully. Indeed, that was my first thought; but after talking it over with several people, I quite gave up the idea, for where shall we collect the means for such a very large undertaking from? And, believe me, an asylum like that will want a considerable sum of money, if there is to be room for everyone who shows any need or fitness for it. We must think of the course of time, and not merely build for ourselves. Everything is moving forwards with giant strides; one year there's to spare, and the next too little. You see to what dimensions the requirements of the people have risen. All sorts of capabilities and powers have been developed at the speed of seven-league boots, just as if by magic, in whatever department you like to mention. Thus it has become too dear a game to provide places for posterity before one's own self and one's wife and children. So what *I* say is, "God Lord, we must pull out that tooth."

BRAND. And then, if anyone behaves *too* madly, you will have the great hall.

BAILLIE. [*Delighted.*] Yes, the room would be almost always empty! That was quite an ingenious idea, Brand. If the building plan only does not break down, we shall get a lunatic asylum *gratis,* and shall have, gathered under one common roof, overshadowed by the same flag, the most essential elements from which our Commune takes its colour—we shall have the whole body of our paupers, our deluge of rascality, and our lunatics who went about before without care or correction, all together. And then we shall have the fruits of freedom with our election contests and their flood of eloquence. We shall have our Council Chamber where we can talk over what's to be done for the benefit of the Commune, and our Recreation Hall where we can give promises concerning the management of our inheritance from the past. If then the thing only doesn't fall through, then the "son of the rocks" will get all that he can in fairness demand—the right to live his own life. God knows, our neighbourhood is not rich; yet as soon as the Public Institute is built, I think it may safely be called a well-organized district.

BRAND. But the means—?

BAILLIE. Ah! there's the rub, in this as in everything else; there's always hesitation in the payment of contributions, and if I am to stand without your help, I know I must strike my flag. But if you will support my idea with the power of your words it will go forward easily, and if I once get it matured your kind help shan't be forgotten.

BRAND. You mean you would be glad to buy me over?

BAILLIE. I should call my plan by another name. I should say, "for common use and advantage; to fill up the chasm of discord which has hitherto yawned between us, and whereby both have suffered."

BRAND. Then you have chosen a bad time.

BAILLIE. Ah, yes; I know, the great sorrow which has recently fallen upon you and your family—but your manly behaviour misled me, and my need of the credit of the District—

BRAND. I am ready, when need be, whether in moments of joy or sorrow; but, on another and valid ground, this time you have come on a fruitless errand.

BAILLIE. On what ground?

BRAND. I, myself, am going to build.

BAILLIE. What! You build? Take my idea—

BRAND. Not quite. [*Pointing out of the window.*] Baillie, can you see—?

BAILLIE. There?

BRAND. Yes.

BAILLIE. That great, ugly, wooden building? That's the parsonage cow-house, isn't it?

BRAND. No—not that; the little ugly one.

BAILLIE. What! The church?

BRAND. [*Nodding.*] I am going to build it—great.

BAILLIE. No, the devil you don't! No one shall alter the church—that'll be to thwart my plan. My plan's ready made, and it's urgent; but your throws me out of the saddle. Two

things at once are too many—so give
n!

BRAND. I have never given in.

BAILLIE. You *must* here, man! Build
ny Lock-up, my Pest-house and my
Politico-Recreation Hall, all together
—in fact, to put it short, my Mad-
ouse—and no matter if the church is
umble-down. And why must it come
down? It was good enough in times
one by.

BRAND. Possibly; *now* that time is
ast.

BAILLIE. Well, *I* have never seen it
ull!

BRAND. There is not room in it for
single soul to rise.

BAILLIE. [*Shaking his head in as-
onishment.*] The single soul proved by
hat the need for my asylum. [*Chang-
ng his tone.*] Let the church be—
hat's my advice. It may be called, in
way, an item of our noble patrimony.
t *is* a noble heirloom; it must not be
estroyed for a whim. Yes, if my plan
f building goes to the wall, I shall rise
gain in the popular favour, like a
hoenix from its ashes! I shall appear
s the champion of its memory, on our
oasts! Here once stood a heathen
emple—likely enough in King Bele's
ime; then at last the church was
aised, and the pious hero's robbery
nd rapine took place. Sacred in its
imple splendour, venerable in its an-
ique form, it has raised its head aloft
ntil our own days.

BRAND. But these signs of former
ower have surely been long ago laid
n the grave. There is not the least
estige of them remaining now.

BAILLIE. That is just it! It is so old
hat it does not exist any longer; but
in my grandfather's days there was
a hole in the wall still left.

BRAND. A hole?

BAILLIE. Yes—as big as a four-
bushel sack!

BRAND. But the wall itself!

BAILLIE. Ah! *that* was gone. So you
see I distinctly say that the destruction
of the church is impossible. It would
be a shameful, horrible, barbaric thing
without a parallel! And the means—
where are we to get them? Do you
think we are so prodigal here as to
conjure up items of expenditure on the
production of an abortive scheme,
when with the least bit of management
we can so far patch up the old place
that it won't come down in *our* time?
But go and spy out the camp. I shall
be the winner after all.

BRAND. I do not intend to squeeze
out a goat for houseroom for my God.
I shall build with my own money—my
inheritance, my whole property to the
last mite shall be spent on this work.
Now, Baillie, are you still so bold as
to think you can alter my mind?

BAILLIE. [*Folding his hands.*] I feel
as if I had fallen from the clouds!
A thing like this is scarcely ever heard
of—even in towns—but in a country
place like this! and *here* too, where it
has so long been the rule to keep the
purse shut even against pressing needs!
You are letting loose a perfect *flood* of
munificence—a rippling, gleaming,
gushing, foaming flood! Really, Brand,
as I say, I am dumbfounded.

BRAND. In intention I renounced my
heritage long ago.

BAILLIE. Ah! there has been a good
deal of whispering, hinting at some-
thing of the kind, but I thought it
was mere talk. A man doesn't often go

and sacrifice everything, when there's no question of evident advantage. However, that's your own affair. If you're going first, then I'll follow after. You're in luck; you can act, and I can wiggle on step by step. Brand, we will build the church *together*.

BRAND. What! Are you going to give up your own plan?

BAILLIE. The good Lord knows I am, and a fool I should be if I didn't. Which d'you think the crowd flocks to, when one wants to pamper and stuff and fatten them, and another wants to milk and shear and flay them? Yes, death and destruction! I'm with you. I'm quite hot on the plan, quite taken with it, moved by it; agitated almost. It was a lucky chance that brought me to the parsonage this evening; for I'll be bound, if it hadn't been for *my* plan, *yours* would probably never have come into your head, at all events would never have been given to the world. So the building of a new parish church is my own work.

BRAND. But, remember, we cannot spare that towering relic of antiquity!

BAILLIE. [*Looking out of the window.*] Seen in the two-fold light of the new moon, and the newly-fallen snow, it does look a rubbishy thing.

BRAND. What, Baillie?

BAILLIE. Brand, it is too old! It is quite inexplicable to me that I never saw it before this evening, but the rod of the weather-cock is all askew; it wouldn't be safe to go on using it. And where is there any style, any architecture, if one really examines the roof and the walls? What is one to call arches like those? The profession would call them hideous; well, I must say, I share their opinion! And the tufts of moss on the roof, God bless my soul! *they're* not from King Bele's time. No, no, piety can go too far! Anyone can see and understand, that the rotten old cabin is nothing but mere rubble.

BRAND. But supposing the people made their voices heard, and refused to have it down?

BAILLIE. Then if no one else will do it, I will. During the Christmas holidays, the sooner the better, I will have everything in order which the forms require, and set the whole thing going smoothly. I will agitate, and write, and work. Ha, ha! you know the sort of man the Baillie is! And if I can't manage to drive the stupid herd together to have it down, I'll tear it down to the ground, beam by beam, with my own hands. That I will, if I have to take my wife and all my daughters with me! Death and destruction! down it comes.

BRAND. This is quite a different tone from the one you spoke in at first.

BAILLIE. One of the fruits of humanitarianism is to get the better of all prejudice; and if the poet says the truth, it is actually a fine thing, that a man's thoughts have wings—in other words, can transmigrate. Farewell! [*He takes up his hat.*] Now I must see after that gang.

BRAND. See after what?

BAILLIE. Ah, did you ever hear such a thing! I and another man caught to-day on the boundaries of the Commune a troop of gipsies as ill-favoured as the fiend. I got other help with cords and ropes, and now they're safe and sound at your nearest neighbour's

rthward; but, devil take me, if two three didn't get off!

BRAND. And yet the bells have just ng in the time of peace.

BAILLIE. But however did that brood devils come here? Though, of course, a certain sense, you may say, they ong to the parish [*laughing*], and n to *you!* Here's a riddle for *you*, ess it if you can—and will: There people who exist in consequence of who was the origin of you, and yet y exist simply because they are of ther race.

BRAND. [*Shaking his head.*] Good l, there are so many riddles men e upon and cannot guess.

BAILLIE. But this one is easy to ss. You must have often heard in Commune one tale or another about oor lad out here to the west who as learned as four parsons; he ed your mother—

BRAND. What else?

BAILLIE. Just fancy, a girl with l of her own! However, of course sent him to Jericho, as he must e expected. But d'you know what fellow does then? He goes half off head and ends betrothing some- else—a gipsy;—and before his th he added children of his own to band, which roves about in poverty wickedness. The parish is even al- ed to keep one of these bastard s as a reminder of his pretty do- —

BRAND. And that is—?

BAILLIE. The gipsy-girl Gerd.

BRAND. [*In an undertone.*] Is this

BAILLIE. [*Jocosely.*] Well, it isn't ld riddle. Why, his offspring exists irtue of her who is your origin, for the secret source of the brood was that he was in love with your mother.

BRAND. Tell me, Baillie, can you mention anything that could afford relief to these poor souls?

BAILLIE. Pooh! what they want is to be inside the house of correction! They're lost, head over ears; to rescue them would be to steal from the fiend; he'll have to go bankrupt if he doesn't get his own out of the world.

BRAND. And yet you thought of building a house on a large scale as a refuge from trouble and necessity!

BAILLIE. That motion the mover withdrew as soon as it was made.

BRAND. But supposing—supposing it was a fine—

BAILLIE. [*Smiling.*] Now you're talking in a different tone from the one you spoke in at first. [*Slapping him on the shoulder.*] Only let the dead be dead and forgotten; a man must act with firmness and decision. Farewell! I daren't loiter any longer; I must be off again and try to find where the runaways are hiding. We shall meet again soon. A happy Christmas to you! Farewell, farewell! My greetings to your wife. [*He goes.*]

BRAND. [*After a thoughtful silence.*] Ah, atonement here is endless.—The thousand strands of the thread of fate are so wildly, so strangely entangled—guilt lies so mingled with the fruit of guilt, the one infecting the other—that if a man searches into it, he sees right and the bloodiest wrong become as one. [*He goes to the window, and stands for some time looking out.*] My little child, my guiltless lamb, you were slain for my mother's deeds. A poor distracted soul bore a message from Him Whose throne is above the crest

of the clouds, and bade me cast the dice and choose; and this poor distracted soul came into existence because my mother's soul went astray. Thus the Lord uses the fruit of guilt as material for compensation and justice; thus He sits on high, and hurls down His visitations to the third generation. [*He turns away from the window in dismay.*] Yes, the God of the Law is upon our race. The primary end is Compensation. In the power of self-sacrifice lies the possibility of uprising; but this truth is being *lied* out of this generation, because the people dread the knowledge of it. [*He paces for some time up and down the room.*] Prayer! prayer! H'm! it's a word that slips through the lips glibly enough—a word prostituted to every case by every class. For them, "Prayer" means, shrieking for mercy in wind and storm to a riddle of riddles, begging for a place upon Christ's load, stretching up both hands—and standing knee-deep in the slough of doubt. Ha! ha! If thereupon the thing were done, then I dare venture with any man, to hammer at the door of the Lord, Who is "terrible to praise." [*He stops, and thinks in silence.*] And yet, in the worst days of anguish, in the great and terrible moment of sorrow, when the child fell into its last sleep, when the kisses of its mother's mouth could not bring back the smile to its cheek—how was it? Did I not pray then? Whence came that sweet delirium, that stream of song, that melody that sounded from afar off and floated by, and bore me aloft, a free man? Did I pray? Was I refreshed in the prayer? Did I talk herein with God? Did He hearken to me? Did He look down upon t house of sorrow, where I was wee ing? How do I know? Now all is sh and barred, and darkness has aga fallen upon me, and there is no light no light to be found.—Yes! there Agnes!—*she* sees blindfolded! [*A calls out in distress.*] Light, Agnes light, if you can!

[Agnes *opens the door, and comes with the festal candlesticks lit; a cle light falls over the room.*]

Brand. Light!

Agnes. Look! here is the Yule ca dle, Brand.

Brand. [*Softly.*] Ah, the Yule ca dle!

Agnes. [*Placing the candlesticks the table.*] Have I been long?

Brand. No, no!

Agnes. Oh, how cold it is her Why, you must be chilled—!

Brand. [*Austerely.*] No.

Agnes. [*Smiling.*] How proud y are! You *will* not want light a warmth. [*She puts on more fuel.*]

Brand. [*Walking up and dow* H'm—*will* not!

Agnes. [*In a low tone to hers while she is decorating the room.*] T candlestick shall stand there. L year he snatched with his little finge at the bright flame of the Yule cand He was so merry and fresh and quic he stretched himself up on his lit chair, and asked if it was a sun. [*S moved the candlestick a little.*] N the light of the candle falls full on out on—the place where. Now he c see the twinkle through the windo pane from where he sleeps; now can peep softly in and see the brig ness and glow of our Christmas roo But the window-panes look as if th

e veiled with tears. Wait a mo-
it—wait a moment; they shall smile
n— [*She wipes the window.*]

RAND. [*He has been following her
i his eyes, and says softly:*] When
this sea of sorrow, stirred from its
th, lie down and rest in peace? It
t rest!

GNES. [*To herself.*] Look, how
r it is! as if the partition were
e; as if the room had widened out
it; as if the grim, cold earth had
lenly changed into a warm alcove,
re the child can sleep sweet and
nd.

RAND. What are you doing, Ag-
?

GNES. Hush! Keep silent!

RAND. [*Going nearer.*] Why did
draw back the curtain just now?

GNES. Oh, it was only a dream; I
awake now.

RAND. There are snares laid in
ms. Shut the shutters again.

GNES. [*Entreatingly.*] Brand!

RAND. Shut them close—*close!*

GNES. Oh, do not be hard; it is not
t.

RAND. Shut them—shut them!

GNES. [*Drawing the shutters be-
the window.*] There, I have shut
fastened them. But I am certain
God is not vexed, even if I did
k from the wells of comfort in the
t respite of my dream.

RAND. Of course not! He is such
ild, indulgent Judge; you don't
d at any disadvantage with Him,
n idol gets a little share of your
ship now and then!

GNES. [*Bursting into tears.*] Oh,
me, then, how far the Demand
! My feet are tired to death—my
s flag!

BRAND. I have told you, every sacrifice that is not *All* is as though it were cast into the sea.

AGNES. But mine was *All;* I have no more!

BRAND. [*Shaking his head.*] Your sacrifice must be followed by more.

AGNES. [*Smiling.*] Ask! I have the courage of penury.

BRAND. Give.

AGNES. Take. Ah, Brand, you can find nothing.

BRAND. You have your sorrow and your memories, you have your flood of sinful longing—

AGNES. [*Desperate.*] I have the roots of my tortured heart! Tear them up, tear them up!

BRAND. You cast your sacrifice into the mouth of the abyss in vain, if you wail over your loss!

AGNES. [*Shuddering.*] Your Lord's way is steep and strait.

BRAND. For the Will there is only this one way.

AGNES. But the way of mercy—?

BRAND. [*Taking up her words.*]—is built of altar-stones.

AGNES. [*Staring vacantly and trembling.*] Now, those words of the Scripture open like a great abyss whereof I never reached the depth before.

BRAND. What words?

AGNES. "Whoso seeth Jehovah shall die."

BRAND. [*Throwing his arms round her, and pressing her close up to him.*] Oh! hide, hide! Do not look at Him! Shut thine eyes.

AGNES. Shall I?

BRAND. [*Letting her go.*] No.

AGNES. You suffer, Brand.

BRAND. I love you.

AGNES. Yours is a hard love.

BRAND. Too hard?

AGNES. Never ask me; I follow where you lead.

BRAND. Do you think I dragged you away from your dancing and play, unheedingly; that I smote you with the commandment of Willing Sacrifice, for the sake of half-measures? Alas for you and me! then the sacrifice made here was too dear, too great. You are my wife; I dare demand you, *wholly,* to live the life of the Call.

AGNES. Well, demand; but do not leave me.

BRAND. Why! I want quiet and rest. Soon the great church shall be built.

AGNES. My little church has sunk into dust.

BRAND. If it was the temple of your heart's idol, it must needs be thrown down in the storm. [*Embracing her in agony.*] All peace be with you, and through you, with me and mine, by the strait way. [*He goes towards the side-door.*]

AGNES. Brand, may I move—quite softly—the cruel barrier, the window shutter? Just a little? Just ajar? Brand, may I?

BRAND. [*In the doorway.*] No. [*He goes into his own room.*]

AGNES. Shut, shut—everything shut! Even oblivion shut off! A bar for complaint, a seal on sighs, a bolt before heaven and the grave! I must go out; I cannot breathe here amid the pangs of loneliness! Out? Whither? Are not stern eyes looking down upon me from the heights? Even if I fly from this place, can I take my heart's treasure too? Could I fly, if I wished it, from the empty silence of my terror? [*She listens at the door of* BRAND'S *room.*] He is reading aloud; my voice will not reach his ears. I help! No remedy, no comfort! T God of Christmas has enough to with listening to the thanks and car and games and dancing of rich peo —people rich in children and fortuna Christmas is His time, the time of m riment. He cannot see me; He ca not attend to the whimpering of a lo ly mother. [*She approaches the w dow stealthily.*] Shall I open the wi dow-shutter, that the full clear lig may drive the terrors and shudderi of the night away from his dark be chamber? No, he is not down the Christmas is the children's own tim he will have leave to come hither. P haps he is standing outside n stretching out his arms to tap at mother's window, and finds it closed. Was not that the cry of a child? A I have no help nor comfort! It is barred up here; your father barred Alf, I dare not open it now! You an obedient little boy; we have ne vexed him, you and I. Fly home heaven again; *there* is light and me ment; there the children choirs are play. But do not let anyone see y weeping—do not say that your fat shut you out when you came knocked. A little child cannot und stand all that we big grown-up peo have to learn. Say he was sorrow —say he sighed. Tell them it was who plucked you pretty leaves fo garland. Can you see it? That is h [*She listens, thinks to herself, and t shakes her head.*] Ah, I am dreami There is more than the shutter to p us. The wall of partition will stand it falls in the glow of the cleans flames; then the vault will be rent the bars broken; then the hinges

prison door will cry and the great
spring back. There is much here
much to be done, before we two can
ee together. I must work on in
nce, in order to fill the abyss of the
nand to the full; I must harden
self, I must *will*. But to-night is a
ival. How wide is the difference
m last year! Hush! We must keep
n festival; I will bring out my
asures. Since the death of my hap-
ess, only a mother's soul can com-
hend *their* boundless price.

*She kneels down at a chest of draw-
opens a drawer, and takes out va-
s things. At the same moment*
ND *opens the door, and is going to
ak to her; but when he sees what
is doing, he stops short and remains
nding where he was.* AGNES *does
see him.*]

RAND. [*In an undertone.*] Always
same fluttering over the grave, the
e playing in the garden of Death!

GNES. Here is the veil. Here is the
k he was carried in to his christen-
Here in this bundle I've got the
k—[*She holds it up in the air,
s at it, and laughs.*] Dear Lord,
smart and sweet it is! My little
looked lovely when he sat in the
at church. Here is the scarf and
cap he was dressed in the first time
was allowed to go out into the air.
was too long then, but it soon got
small for him—it shall lie there at
side: his mittens, his stockings—
t legs he had!—and his new silk
l that he had, to keep him from be-
chilled—it has never been worn,
quite new. Ah! there lie the clothes
the journey that he was wrapped
arm and close in, so that he might
el softly and comfortably. When I
had laid them by again, I was tired
to death.

BRAND. [*Clenching his hands in
pain.*] Spare me, O God! I cannot
break down the house of her last idol.
Send some other man if it be right!

AGNES. It is stained—have I been
weeping? What treasures they are!
Embroidered with pearls, crushed with
pain, drenched with tears, encompassed
as with an halo by the terror of the
Choice,—*holy!*—This is the sacring
cloak he wore when he was offered at
the font. Ah, how rich I am still!

[*There is a sharp rapping at the
house door.* AGNES *turns round with a
shriek, and sees* BRAND *at the same mo-
ment. The door is thrown open, and a*
WOMAN, *raggedly clad, comes hastily
in, with a child in her arms.*]

WOMAN. [*She sees the child's
clothes, and calls out to* AGNES:] Share
with me, you rich mother.

AGNES. You are tenfold richer.

WOMAN. Ha! you're like the rest;
your mouth always full of words!

BRAND. [*Going up to her.*] Tell me
what you want here.

WOMAN. Not you; for you're the
Parson. I'd rather be out again in the
storm than hear your preachifying
about sin; I'd rather run till I dropt,
I'd rather be drowned and rot on a
skerry, than stand before the man in
black who knows all about the way
down to the bonfire! The devil! can *I*
help becoming what I am?

BRAND. [*In an undertone.*] The voice
and features freeze me with a terrible
foreboding!

AGNES. Rest and warm yourself if
you are cold. If the child is hungry,
he shall be fed.

WOMAN. A gipsy dare not sit down

where there is light and warmth. The roads, the rocks, the woods, the fells, the moors, are the places for our folk; we must be on the road, we must wander; house and home are for others like you. I must be off again, quick as lightning; they are after me like dogs! The Baillie and the Constable, the men of the law, 'ld tie me up, and glad, if they could.

BRAND. You shall not be disturbed here.

WOMAN. Here! Under a roof and between walls? No, I tell you; the winter night gives us healthier breezes. But a garment to swaddle the child! His eldest brother, the varmint! slipt away from me, like a thief, with the clout I wrapped him in. Look you, he is half naked, blue and frozen; the rime cut through him as it flew by.

BRAND. Woman, save your little one from your wild deadly path. Let him be rescued, let the load be lifted from him; the brand can be washed out—

WOMAN. Oh! yes, you know all about it! A wonder such as that no one can do—*shall* ever do. War upon you who have thrust him out! Do you know where his mother gave him birth? On a bank by the ditch, with singing, gambling, and drinking all about him. He was christened in mire and sleet, crossed with a bit of charcoal, his thirst was quenched with a cluck of the bottle; at the moment he came from his mother, people stood about us swearing. Who do you suppose they were? God have mercy on us! The child's father and the child's kin.

BRAND. Agnes?

AGNES. Yes.

BRAND. You see your duty?

AGNES. [*With horror.*] Brand—her! Never *that!*

WOMAN. Give it me, give it me; gi it me all! the finest silk and the ca off rag. Nothing is too bad or too goo so long as it is soft to wrap rou him. His breath will soon be spent; shall die with his body thawed.

BRAND. [*To* AGNES.] *Now* you he the sound of the Choice!

WOMAN. You have plenty for yo own child; tell me, haven't you got clout for life and a shroud for dea for mine?

BRAND. Do you hear no omen, cry of warning, speaking with h tongue?

WOMAN. Give them to me!

AGNES. It is sacrilege—blood-guil ness to the little dead!

BRAND. He was sent to the grave vain, if the path ended on the thresho

AGNES. [*Crushed.*] Have your wi I must tread my heart's roots und foot. Woman, come and take the you shall have part of my superflui

WOMAN. Give them to me!

BRAND. *Part,* Agnes—*part?*

AGNES. [*With passionate force.*] had rather be killed than robbed of *a* Look, I have yielded step by step; can yield no more. Half is enoug she does not want more.

BRAND. Was *all* too much *th* when you bought it for your own?

AGNES. [*Giving her the things* Come, woman. Here take the cloak own child wore at his baptism. Here the frock, the scarf, the cap; it is u ful against the night air. Here is little silken hood; he cannot get chil in that. Take it; take the last rag

WOMAN. Give them to me!

BRAND. Agnes, have you given *a*

AGNES. [*Giving more.*] Woman, e is his sacring-cloak he wore when was offered at the font.

VOMAN. All right! now I see the ce is empty. I only wish I were away. I'll swaddle him up on the s, then off I go with the whole lot. e goes.*]

GNES. [*She undergoes a severe in- d struggle. At length she asks:*] me, Brand, is it fair for still e to be asked?

RAND. Tell me first, whether you d the horror of the gift—*willingly?*

GNES. No.

RAND. Your gift is cast into the The Demand still hangs over you. *is going.*]

GNES. [*She is silent until he is rly at the door; then she calls out:*] nd!

RAND. What do you want?

GNES. I lied. Look! I repent; I nit. You never knew, you never ected, that I had not given the last.

RAND. Well!

GNES. [*Taking a baby's cap, folded from her bosom.*] Look! one thing pt back.

RAND. The cap?

GNES. Yes, damp with the cold t of death, wet with tears, and then treasured at my heart.

RAND. Stay in the power of your gods! [*He is going.*]

GNES. Stop!

RAND. What do you want?

GNES. Oh, you *know!* [*She holds he cap to him.*]

RAND. [*Going nearer to her, and g, without taking the cap:*] Will- ?

NES. Willingly.

AND. Give me the cap. The woman is still sitting on the steps. [*He goes.*]

AGNES. Robbed, robbed—everything robbed—the last tie that bound me to the dust! [*She stands motionless for a moment; little by little the expression of her face changes to an expression of the most radiant happiness.* BRAND *comes back; she flies joyfully to meet him, throws herself on his neck, and cries:*] I am free! Brand, I am free!

BRAND. Agnes!

AGNES. The darkness is past! All the terrors that have weighed like a nightmare on my breast lie now cast into the abyss. There is victory in the combat of the Will. All the mists have stolen away, all the clouds have drifted over; through the night I see the glow of morning cast its light on death! The churchyard, the churchyard! The word opens no way for tears. The name no longer tears the wound; the child has been carried to heaven!

BRAND. Yes, Agnes, now you have conquered.

AGNES. Yes, assuredly, I have conquered now—conquered terror and the grave! Oh, look up, look heavenward! Do you see Alf at the foot of the throne, glad and glowing as in the light of life, stretching out his arms to us? If I had a thousand mouths, if I dared, if I could, I would not open *one* to beg for him back again. Oh, how great, how rich, God is in finding means! The sacrifice of the child, the Host I offer, has rescued my soul from death. He was born to me to be lost; I must needs be enticed to victory! I thank you that you led my hand; you have striven faithfully for me. Ah, I saw the anguish of your heart! Now *you* stand in the valley of the Choice;

on *you* now has fallen the weight of its "All or nothing"!

BRAND. Agnes, you speak in riddles; all the anguish of the strife is past!

AGNES. Do you forget those words of old, "He who seeth Jehovah shall die"?

BRAND. [*Shrinking back.*] Alas! what a light you kindle! No! a thousand times, no! I have strong hands for the fight. *You* shall not leave me. Let all on earth slip from me! I can forego every gain, but never, never you!

AGNES. Choose; you stand where the road divides. Quench the light that burns in me; block the spring of my Christmas thought; give me the rags of my idol—the woman is still sitting without—let me go back again to those heaven-blind days; sink me down again into the mire, where until now I have gone on sinning in my dulness. You can do anything; you are free to do it. I have but little strength against you; clip my wings, bar up my soul, hang the clog of serfdom to my heels, bind me, draw me down again to that place whence you yourself raised me—let me live as I lived when I writhed in darkness! If you will and dare do it, I am your wife as I was before. Choose; you stand where the road divides!

BRAND. It were woe to me, if I would! Oh, but far from this place, far from all memories of our sorrow, you shall find that life and light are *one*.

AGNES. Do you forget that the baptism of the Call and the Sacrifice bind you *here*? Do you forget the hundreds of souls whom your mission is to heal, *here*—whom the Lord God commanded you to lead forward, home to the fountain of redemption? Choose; you stan where the road divides.

BRAND. I have no choice to make.

AGNES. [*Throwing her arms roun his neck.*] I thank you for all—I than you for this. You have led me faith fully when I was weary. The cloud of heaviness are upon me—you wi watch faithfully by my bed.

BRAND. Sleep; your work for th day is over now.

AGNES. Over, and the candle lit fo the night. The victory has consume my store of strength; I am faint an weary. Oh, but God is easy to praise Good-night, Brand!

BRAND. Good-night!

AGNES. Good-night. I thank ye for all. Now I long to sleep. [*Sh goes.*]

BRAND. [*Clenching his hands again his breast.*] Soul, be faithful till th last. The victory of victories is to lo *all*. In your loss of *all* lies your gai that alone is possessed for ever, whi is lost.

ACT V.

SCENE—*Six months later. The ne church stands finished, decorated f the consecration. There is a river flo ing close by. It is early on a fogg morning. The* CLERK *is busy hangi up garlands outside the church; a litt later the* SCHOOLMASTER *comes up.*

SCHOOLM. On the spot already?

CLERK. I need be, too! Give me hand here; I am going to hang foliag here from post to post to form a ba rier for the procession.

SCHOOLM. Something is being p up at the Parsonage ending in a rou opening.

CLERK. Yes, I know.

SCHOOLM. What is it to be?

CLERK. What they call a device, in
our of the Parson, with his name
a gilt ground.

SCHOOLM. Ah! we're to have fine do-
s in the parish to-day. People are
eaming in from a long distance. The
rd is almost white with sails.

CLERK. Yes; the parish has awaked
. In the Parson's predecessor's
e, poor man! you never heard of
ggles and strife; then, one slept
's self, and one's neighbor slept too.
ich state of things is the best, I
't know.

SCHOOLM. Life, good Clerk; life!

CLERK. But you and I pass by this
e" unmoved. How does that come
ut?

SCHOOLM. It is because we worked
il the rest went to sleep, and when
y woke up, we went to sleep; for
n there was no need of us.

CLERK. And yet you said that life
the best.

SCHOOLM. That is what the Provost
the Parson say. I am not the man
differ from them, so far, mind you,
it concerns all that large body of
ple—the "rest." But you and I
e under a different law from the
which obtains on the hillside. You
we are Officials of the District;
must keep a tight rein, give our at-
ion to Church discipline and in-
ction, and not meddle with trifles;
n word, we must keep aloof from
ions.

LERK. But the Parson himself is
he thick of it.

CHOOLM. That is just what he ought
to be. I know that his superiors,
their own circle, are dissatisfied
his doings; and if they had dared
account of the people, they would
have turned their backs upon him long ago. But he's a knowing man; he scents the match, *he* knows well enough what binds up the bundle. He goes and builds the church. Blindness spreads over everyone here when anything is *"doing."* No one cares *what* is "doing," so that "doing" there is. You see, *that's* the thing. All of us alike, sheep and shepherds, may well be called a race of *doers.*

CLERK. *You* have been a member of the Storthing, so you must know the country and the people; but someone who travelled through the parish soon after the revival here, said that formerly we used to be sleeping, and then we woke up, and became promising.

SCHOOLM. True; these people are "promising"—they are a people that promise a great deal. A people that has risen in such a short time that soon all of them will be their own interpreters of their promise.

CLERK. I have often speculated about that. Now tell me, since you have studied, what is what's called "a Popular Promise"?

SCHOOLM. "A Popular Promise," my dear Clerk? It would take too long to discuss that here; but it is something everyone runs after on the strength of an idea, that it is something great which is to happen—in the people's *future,* you observe.

CLERK. Thank you; I understand *that;* but there is still one thing I want to get a hasty explanation of.

SCHOOLM. Ask whatever you like.

CLERK. Tell me, at what date will the time they call "the Future" come?

SCHOOLM. It won't come; it never comes!

CLERK. Never?

SCHOOLM. No—that's in the nature of the thing; for when it comes, it has become *present*—it is *future* no longer.

CLERK. Yes, that's true; I can see *that*. There can be no dispute about it. But when will a "promise" take effect?

SCHOOLM. Why, I have just this minute said: "A Popular Promise" is a future covenant; it will take effect in the future.

CLERK. Yes; but tell me, when is this future coming?

SCHOOLM. [*Aside.*] The Clerk's a fool! [*Aloud.*] My good friend, am I to go over it all again? It's impossible for the future to come; for when it comes, it is past.

CLERK. Thank you.

SCHOOLM. Behind every conception lies something that seems like a trick, but really is quite straightforward—at least, to anyone who can count more than his five fingers. To *give* one's word comes to mean never to *keep* one's word, though he who *gives* his word preserves his credit all the same. All keeping of one's word was considered troublesome before, but it may be maintained to be absolutely impossible, if a man is skillful at logic. Well, let the "promise" question take wing. Listen! Tell me—?

CLERK. Hush!

SCHOOLM. What is that?

CLERK. Keep quiet!

SCHOOLM. My word! I can hear someone playing on the organ.

CLERK. It is he.

SCHOOLM. What! the Parson?

CLERK. Just so.

SCHOOLM. I'm blowed! He *is* out early.

CLERK. I don't much fancy the Parson has tumbled the Parson's pillow night.

SCHOOLM. What?

CLERK. All's not right with him. has been eaten up with loneliness ev since he became a widower. He hid his sorrow, it's true, but it breaks o every now and then; it's just as if heart were a leaking, overfilled vess *Then,* he plays. Listen! every no sounds as if he were weeping for wife and child.

SCHOOLM. It is as if they were ta ing—

CLERK. As if one were suffering, a another consoling—

SCHOOLM. H'm—if one but dared feel moved!

CLERK. Ah; if one only weren't official!

SCHOOLM. Ah; if one weren't bou and restrained by all sorts of consi erations for one's position!

CLERK. Ah; if one only dared throw pen and book to the devil a his crew!

SCHOOLM. And if one only had giv up being clever, and dared to *feel!*

CLERK. My friend, no one can us—let us feel.

SCHOOLM. It would be unseemly degrade one's self to a lay sphe According to the Parson's teaching, man must not be two things at time; no man, even if he wants to, be both an official and a human bei One ought to be—in each and eve thing—a copy of our Baillie.

CLERK. Why like him, exactly?

SCHOOLM. You *must* remember great fire at the Baillie's house, wh the archive-chest was carried out a saved?

CLERK. Yes, it was one evening—

CHOOLM. A stormy evening, and the llie worked as if he had ten lives, the devil stood and laughed in the lour. The instant his wife caught it of him she shrieked out; "Save r soul, my dear; the Evil One is er you!" Then the Baillie shouted x through the flames: "My soul?— ell with it! Just help to carry out archives." Ah! he is a Baillie to core—from top to toe, body and ; so I am certain he will reach a e where he will gain his life's re- d.

LERK. And where is that?

CHOOLM. Why, naturally in the Baillies' Paradise.

LERK. My learned friend!

CHOOLM. What of that!

LERK. I believe I can discern be- h every word you say a reference he fermentation of the day; for ientation there is, that's evident: hows itself in everyone's lack of rence for time-honoured custom.

CHOOLM. That which is mouldy t sink into mould. That which is en is nourishment for fresh life; breast of this generation is hollow consumption, and the disease is coughing up—so to the coffin its corpse. Yes, fermentation e is here, that's certain; you don't t a spyglass to see that. The day old church fell, it seemed to take it everything in which our life that moment struck root and fila- and held its ground.

LERK. A silence fell upon the d. They had shouted, "Down with lown with it!" But the cry didn't to the end, and many of them hot about the ears and cast fur- glances and stood buried in thought when the old House of God was actually in ruins: to many of them it seemed sacred.

SCHOOLM. But as long as the new building was not yet firmly and solidly established, the crowd thought they were knit by a thousand ties to the spirit of the old; so they watched the turn of affairs with grief and anxiety, and were shy of the great day, for then the torn flag will be hauled down and the fresh colours fly free before the wind. Then, as the spire rose gradually higher, the parishioners grew paler and more silent; and now—well, now the time is up.

CLERK. [*Pointing to the side.*] Look, what a swarm! Big and little flocking hither!

SCHOOLM. By the thousand. How quiet it is!

CLERK. And yet there is a rumbling like the sea before a breeze.

SCHOOL. It is the heart of the people groaning; it is as if the knowledge were passing through them that these are great times; it is as if they were summoned to a Thing to elect a new God. Listen, where is the Parson? It oppresses me. I wish I could hide myself.

CLERK. And I, too.

SCHOOLM. At a moment like this a man cannot sound his own depth; every deep has a deep beneath. One *will*—and another *won't*,—and a third *would*—

CLERK. My friend!

SCHOOLM. Well, my friend?

CLERK. H'm!

SCHOOLM. Speak! You hesitate!

CLERK. I positively believe we are *feeling.*

SCHOOLM. *What?* Not *I.*

CLERK. Nor I, neither. *One* witness cannot convict a man.

SCHOOLM. You and I are men, not foolish lads. Good-morning! The young people in the school are waiting for me.

[*Exit the* SCHOOLMASTER.]

CLERK. A minute ago I began to see visions as if I were childish. Now I'm cool and collected again, and as close as a clasped book. I must get to work yonder; it's all done here, and idleness is the devil's pillow.

[*He goes out at the other side.*]

The organ, which during the foregoing conversation has sounded somewhat subdued, suddenly breaks out into one roar and ends in a piercing discord. Shortly afterwards BRAND *comes out.*

BRAND. No, I cannot force the notes to peal out at their full power. The music of the organ passes into a screech; the arches of the roof, the vaulting and the walls, seem to approach and press down and close together, wooden and hard. They seem to shut in the melody, as the coffin-lid shuts in the corpse! I have tried, I have attempted; the organ has lost its speech. I lifted up its voice in prayer, but it was driven back again in a muffled hollow moan, broken like the note of a cracked and rusted bell. It was as if the Lord God were present, enthroned on high in the choir. I thought He drove it from Him in wrath with His hand, refusing my petition. In my presumption I made this promise, "The Lord's house shall be built great." I was rash enough to tear down and grub up and level with the ground and sweep away. Now the work stands finished and complete. They all express their admiration chorus, and cry, "Ah! how great, h great!" Is it *they,* who know bett or I, who cannot see it? *Is* it grea Is this house wholly and entirely wh I willed? Is the murmur of that fo boding which gave it birth out of self silenced in it? Is it like the visi temple that I saw in spirit, great a overshadowing all the pain of t world? H'm, if Agnes had lived, would have been different. She co see greatness in little things, ban from me the anguish of doubt, a clasp earth and heaven together li the roof of leaves above the tre trunk. [*Observing the preparations the festival.*] Green garlands, bann on poles, the school practising th song;—the Parsonage is almost fu all the people will visit me;—they ha set up my name in gold. God, give light, or else cast me a thousand fa oms beneath the earth! In an h the festival will begin. Everyon thoughts are full of the Parson. "T Parson" is in everyone's mouth know their thoughts, I feel their wo burning me; praise and approval p like a stream of ice borne by Tr through my hair. If I could but co myself with oblivion and hide my h in a wild beast's den!

BAILLLIE. [*He comes up dressed full uniform, his face beaming w pleasure, and salutes him.*] At last great day has come—the Sabbath af the six week-days. Now we haul do our sail upon the deck, hoist our S day flag, and float down strea smooth and slow, and behold t everything is very good! Good l to you, great and noble man! y fame will soon be carried over

le country. Good luck to you! I quite moved, and yet extremely l, too. But you—?

RAND. I feel strangled.

AILLIE. No; you must get rid of feeling. You must preach, you t thunder; measure out the bushel your flock, brim full. I tell you e is such an echo, that everyone I e spoken with is full of admira-.

RAND. Indeed?

AILLIE. Yes; the Provost himself stonished, and praised you highly. what a noble *style* there is in the k, and what grandeur of form!

RAND. You have remarked that?

AILLIE. Remarked what?

RAND. That it seems great.

AILLIE. Not only *seems*—no, it *is;* from a distance as well as near.

RAND. It *is* so? Really? You k—?

AILLIE. Yes, death and destruction! great—*too* great for people so far h. In other countries I know, of se, there are higher standards; but to us who live shut in on a waste ng barren mounds, on a strip be- n fell and fjord, here it's so great, mazing!

RAND. *This* is how it is—we have changed an old lie for a new.

AILLIE. What is the matter now?

RAND. We have diverted the peo- minds from the mouldering vaults ygone memories to a spire of the od out in the open. Before, the us shouted, "How venerable!" now ars, "Look, how great—it hasn't qual in the whole world!"

AILLIE. My good friend, I must lst in describing anyone who requires a greater church as somewhat rude.

BRAND. However! every man shall possess the truth clearly. The church, as it stands now, is small; to conceal this would be a lie.

BAILLIE. No, listen; have done with such vagaries! What is the good of calling a thing ugly, which one has one's self had all the trouble of building? The people are so perfectly satisfied, they think everything costlier and more perfect than anything they have ever seen before; do let them think so always! Why should we meddle with the poor things, and pester them by lighting tourches whose enlightenment no one wants? It all depends on the judgment of faith. It's of no consequence—not a rap—if the church is a mere kennel, so long as the people firmly believe that it's extraordinarily great.

BRAND. The same doctrine in everything!

BAILLIE. Besides, to-day is a festival; every soul of them is in a manner your guest; it would be unseemly if we did not assume everything to be of the best. And, above all, for your own sake it would be preposterous to meddle with that boil in our system, the *"Truth"* about *Littleness.*

BRAND. Why so?

BAILLIE. You shall hear. First, our leading men have determined to present you with a silver cup, and the inscription on it would be incorrect if the size of the church were underrated: and the song that has been written on purpose, and the speech that I am going to make, will also both be incorrect if the greatness of the work is underestimated. So,

you see, you must give way, and keep your ears shut.

BRAND. I see; a thing that has often been an eyesore to me—a lying feast as the price of a lie!

BAILLIE. God bless my soul! my good friend, what a strong expression! What *are* you driving at? However,—to have done with the point of taste,—just hear my other argument. If the first was silver, *this* is gold; for you know you are the prime object of the honour, esteem, and favour of Royalty—in short, you are created a Knight. This very day you will receive the order, and enjoy the proud distinction of wearing the cross upon your breast.

BRAND. I am already crushed beneath a heavier cross; let whosoever can take that from me.

BAILLIE. Why, how is this? You don't show any special emotion on the receipt of such a favour. You are altogether an enigma. But consider, for God's sake, whether—

BRAND. [*Stamping.*] This is all empty, futile chatter. I leave you as wise as when I came; you have not grasped the least vestige of the inner meaning of my words. I did not mean the greatness that can be measured by feet and inches, but the greatness which, though hidden, is yet effulgent, which at once freezes and fires the soul, which beckons on to dream and ecstasy, which rises above us like a starry night, which—which—leave me, I am faint! Argue, explain, talk to the rest. [*He walks away towards the church.*]

BAILLIE. [*To himself.*] Who can wander through this gibberish and find rhyme or reason? "Greatness" consisting in something "effulgent," "which cannot be measured by inches"!—a "a starry night"?—those were words. Can the parson have been the luncheon-table? [*He goes awa*

BRAND. [*Coming back over the op ground.*] I was never so lonely up the wild moorland as I am here. single question finds an answer; th cast back in my teeth mere chirps a cackle. [*Looking after the* BAILLI I could crush him with my heel! Ev time I try to raise his eyes to so thing above trickery and lying, he sp out his fœtid soul shamelessly bef my eyes. Oh, Agnes! why were too weak? I am weary of this hol game, which no one wins and no loses. Yes, he fights forlorn who fig alone!

[*Enter the* PROVOST.] Oh, my c dren! Oh, my lambs!—no, excuse —I mean my brother official. Th festival scenes—my sermon is runn in my head; I was preparing it yes day, and I've got the taste of it in my mouth. But enough of that! cept my thanks for having broken ice so manfully, for having strugg on amid all the cries and talk, for h ing pulled down what was ready fall, and built it afresh so great suitable.

BRAND. Still far from it!

PROVOST. What, my good friend? there something more wanting bes consecration?

BRAND. A rebuilt house must be habited by regenerated souls cleansed hearts.

PROVOST. That comes entirely of self. Such an expansive and finely-p elled vault, such a well-lit space, induce the people to appear clean And that splendid echo, which dou

y word of the Pastor, must mul- the faith of each member of the es a hundredfold. In truth, we results equal to any that the large s even will be able to exhibit.— all this we are indebted to you e. Accept, therefore, the heartfelt ks of a fellow-official, which ks, I presume, is to be followed up nany a winged discourse from the ger wits of the Archdeaconry at luncheon upon this festal day, h we celebrate in your honour. my dear Brand, you are so pale—?

AND. Strength and spirit failed ng ago.

OVOST. Quite natural—so much to rintend, and everything to do with- help or support! However, *now* worst is over, and we have every ise of a glorious day. Only do e downhearted; it will all pass off

A crowd of several thousands athered together from distant par- . Consider it over, and say—but is a match for you in eloquence? ! a body of your fellow-officials come to meet you with open arms, all the hearts of the Populace are of gratitude and kindly feeling rds you. And the work itself, ght to such a happy conclusion! everything so handsomely dec- d! And the cry of the day, "How ! how great!" And then the ele- banquet! I stepped inside the nage; the calf had just been cut That's really a splendid animal, know. I'm sure it must have taken of trouble, to find such a fine bit esh as that in these hard times, meat up to nine marks a pound. let that pass until later. It was ier errand that brought me here.

BRAND. Speak away. Slash and stab, rend and tear me!

PROVOST. My friend, my method of proceeding is not so violent. But to be brief, for our time is short, there is just one little point which you ought to set right from to-day. I am sure you will not find it difficult. Yes, I imagine you have some sort of notion to what I refer? I refer to your official duty. Hitherto you have at times laid too little stress on Use and Wont, and yet Use and Wont are the first things, if they are not actually the greatest. But, good Lord, I do not want to scold. A man may be young and fresh to the work; he may come from a large town and cannot know the state of the country places. But *now*, my friend, *now* it is important to put the matter on a better footing. Hitherto you have paid too much attention to the particular needs of individuals; between ourselves, that is a grave fault. Weigh them in the lump, comb them all with the same comb; believe me, you will not repent it.

BRAND. Explain yourself more clearly!

PROVOST. Look here, then! You have just built a church for the benefit of the parish. That church is a garment for the spirit of peace and law; for in religion the State sees the power which is best able to produce an elevation of tone, the defence wherein its own security lies—in short, a rule of morality. You see, the resources of the State are but slender; it wants to get the worth of its money. "Good Christian," means to it, "Good citizen." Do you imagine it ladles out its money for the sake of God and the people, only to get trouble from it, itself? No, my dear fellow, the

State is no fool, and the individual would soon be in a sorry plight if it did not strictly and rigidly keep this life only in view. But the aim of the State can only be reached, my friend, by means of its officials; that is to say, in this case, of its clergy.

BRAND. Every word is a word of wisdom. Continue.

PROVOST. There is but little more to be said. You have now made a donation of this church for the benefit of the State, and consequently your work must contribute to the support of the State. In this spirit I look upon the festival to be celebrated in an hour's time; in this spirit will the bells chime, and the deed of donation be read. But the gift entails a promise, the pith of which you ought to examine closely.

BRAND. By God, I never meant that!

PROVOST. Well, *now,* my friend, it is too late—

BRAND. Too late! Too late! We shall see about that!

PROVOST. Be reasonable! It almost makes me laugh. What is there in it to moan over? You're not going to promise anything wicked. You can look after each soul just as well, even if the State *is* served at the same time; you can easily hit off the requirements of two masters if you will only behave with discretion. You are not a priest in order to save Jack and Jill from the vengeance of hell-fire, but to enable the whole parish to gain the full benefit of the Fountains of Grace. And yet, if the parish is saved, it is evident that each individual gets his share of Salvation. Look you (though you'll scarcely believe it), the State is exactly *half* republican. It hates freedom like the plague, but looks favo ably upon equality. Now, equality c never be attained until every inequali has been levelled down—and *this* what you do *not* do! On the contra you have greatly increased the glari inequality which had never come light before. Formerly each man w a member of the Church, *now* he is personality; and this is no service the State. And this is why it is su slow work collecting together Unifor ity-Dues with all the other social ble ings, for the Church is no longer t hat to fit every head.

BRAND. What a vista is opening before me now!

PROVOST. But do not be downhea ed; that's of *no* use; although there no denying that the confusion wh prevails is enough to make one shu der. But while there's life there's hop and by your gift of the church you c firmed and increased your obligation, work in concert with the State Chu for the State's ends. There must b rule in everything, or else the play strength will be dissipated, and, lik wanton, unbroken colt, will overtu fence and hedge and all the thousa boundary marks of established custo In all the relations of order there evidence of a single law, although it christened different names. In the a it is called *School,* and in the milit class, if I'm not mistaken, it is *keep time.* Yes, that's the word, my g friend. *That's* what the State aims It finds a quick march too fast, goose-step too slow;—the same length stride for every man, the same ti for every man's foot,—that, you see the aim of its method.

BRAND. The gutter for the eagle

id for the goose the clefts in the cloud it whirls over the mountain!

PROVOST. We are not animals, thank od; but if we are to make use of bles and stories, we cannot do better an have recourse to Holy Writ. It s an application for everything; it arms with all sorts of stirring para- es from Genesis to Revelation. I will ly mention now the projected Tower Babel. Consider. How far did those ople proceed? And why? The ex- anation is easy; they did not keep to- ther in ranks, each man talked his n language, they did not pull to- ther under one yoke; in short, they came personalities. *That* is half the uble kernel hidden in the shell of e fable;—no man can defend himself *ne;* he is the *odd-man,* and an iso- ted individual stands only to fall. The an whom God wills to slay in the ruggle of life He first individualizes.

mong the Romans the form of the ying was that the gods took away his nses; but *odd* and *mad* are the same ing, and, therefore, every *odd-man* ust expect in the end the same fate befell Colonel Uriah when David nt him on outpost duty.

BRAND. Well, very likely that is ue; but what more? In death, I do t see destruction. And are you so lly and perfectly convinced that those ilders would have succeeded eventu- y—even with one speech and one nd—in raising the top of the Tower Babel to heaven?

PROVOST. To heaven? No, that is st the thing; no one reaches quite to aven. *That* is the other half of the rnel hidden in the shell of the fable, that every building which tries to raise up its head to the stars of heaven stands only to fall.

BRAND. But Jacob's ladder reached to heaven; the craving of the soul reaches to heaven.

PROVOST. In *that* way! Yes, thank God! there's nothing more to say about that. Heaven is naturally the reward of faith and prayer and a well-spent life. But life is one thing and faith an- other; both are spoilt by being mixed. A man ought to do his work for six days, and on the seventh lift up his heart; if the church stood open all the week, the use of Sunday would be gone. You weaken the purifying breath of the Word if it is not carefully econ- omized; for religion, like art, must not be dissipated in vapour. You can gaze at the ideal with safety from the holy shelter of the pulpit, but lay it aside with your surplice as soon as you come out into the light of the day. As I said, there is a law in everything—a law requiring strict limitation, and it is with a view to a necessary explana- ton on this point that I have spoken.

BRAND. One thing is clear to me, that the State's thousand soul-boxes will not fit *me.*

PROVOST. Oh! yes, my friend! you will fill one splendidly,—but on a much higher shelf. You must *up!*

BRAND. That is not done by degrad- ing one's self in the mud.

PROVOST. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted;" if the hook is to catch, it must be bent.

BRAND. If a man is to do his work he must die!

PROVOST. God forbid! how can you imagine that I meant such a thing?

BRAND. Well, he must—he must bleed to death first! A man is not fit

for your wasted, sickly life until he is as dry as a bone.

PROVOST. By God! I would not draw blood from the veins of a cat, much less from yours; but I thought there would be no harm in leaving just ajar the door to the path on which I myself have gone first.

BRAND. And are you aware what you have asked? That I should betray, at the cock-crow of the State, the ideal I have lived for up till now!

PROVOST. Betray, my friend! who asks such a thing? I have only indicated your duty; I want you to bury within yourself what is useless to the society you live in. Keep the whole of it, if you will, only keep it hermetically sealed; soar, swarm, in Heaven's name, inwardly, but not openly before the masses. Believe me, it will do you harm in the end if you are so stubborn and self-willed.

BRAND. Yes, the fear of strife and the hope of gain are Cain's mark upon thy brow; it cries aloud that, wise unto this world, thou didst slay the pure Abel in thine heart.

PROVOST. [*Aside.*] My word! he says "thou"; that's going too far! [*Aloud.*] I will not prolong this discussion now, but I must again beg you to understand that if you wish to rise you must *know* the country and the time you live in; for no one wins in a struggle who has not the times on his side. Just look at artists, look at poets! Do they venture to disregard their duties to the times! Look at our warriors! A sharp-edged sword is a mere myth, here. Why? Because there is a law which lays down, "Consider the needs of thy country." Every man must bridle his idiosyncrasies; he must not rise nor push forward, but hide himself evenly in the midst of the mass. "The times are humanitarian," as the Baillie says; and if you only treat them on humanitarian principles, you may become something great. But all corners must be ground off, every knot must be scraped down; you must be smooth like the rest, and never wander on to any path of your own, if your work is to be done so that it will last.

BRAND. Away from here!

PROVOST. Yes, very likely. A man like you must in the end get into a better sphere of work; but if you are to be satisfied, under wider conditions as under narrow, you must don the uniform of the day. Time must be beaten into the masses by a corporal, with his hand on his staff; for in these days the ideal leader in this country is a corporal. As a corporal leads his men into church by companies, so the parson must lead his into Paradise by parishes. It is all so easy: you have authority as a basis of belief, and when that is founded upon instruction, it can with safety be followed blindly; then, how belief is to be expressed we learn from rule and ritual. So, my brother, do not be downhearted; use the time you have for reflection; investigate the situation, and do not be alarmed! I will make a special effort in the church to raise my tone higher; but one is not accustomed to an echo,—they are so rare in this country. Farewell, farewell! I am going to preach on the flaw in human nature, and the effacing of the image of God. But now I think it is getting time to take a little light refreshment. [*He goes.*]

BRAND. [*Standing a moment as if petrified in his own thoughts.*] I have

crificed everything to my Call, to the ll of God, as I thought in my blindss; now the blast of this day's trump s sounded, and taught me what spirit served. No; not even now! They ve me not! This churchyard has had ood to drink; my light, my life, lies ried here; but my soul they cannot rry away with them. It is horrible stand alone,—where I look to catch glimpse of death; horrible to be ofred stones when I hunger so sorely bread. How true, how terribly true, at he said was, and yet how utterly llow! The dove of God's enlightennt sits hidden; alas! it never flutes over me. Oh, if I could but meet faith one only who would give me urance and peace!

[EJNAR, *pale and emaciated, clad in ck, is coming along the road; when sees* BRAND *he stops.*]

BRAND. [*Calling out.*] You, Ejnar?

EJNAR. Yes, that is my name.

BRAND. I was this moment yearnfor someone whose breast was not wood or stone. Come, let me emace you to my heart!

EJNAR. It is not meet; I am saved.

BRAND. You bear me a grudge for at happened the last time we met—

EJNAR. No; you are not to blame. ee in you the blind instrument the d sent, when I went my wild course the way of the world.

BRAND. [*Drawing back.*] What lanage is this?

EJNAR. The language of peace—the guage a man learns when he casts the sleep of sin and wakes regente.

BRAND. Wonderful! I had heard t you had started on a widely difent road—

EJNAR. I was led astray by pride and confidence in my own strength. The gifts the world is wont to worship, the talent I was said to possess, my voice, were mere perils to me, that drew me into Satan's snares. But God be praised! He was good to me; He forsook not His silly sheep. When the time came He withdrew Himself from me.

BRAND. In what way?

EJNAR. I fell.

BRAND. Fell? How?

EJNAR. Into gambling and drunkenness. He gave me a taste for cards and dice—

BRAND. And do you call *that* the Lord's work?

EJNAR. That was the first step to salvation. After that, He took my health from me. I entirely lost my talent, my love of gaiety was gone; I was sent to the hospital, I lay sick a long while, I lay as if in flames, I thought I saw thousands of great flies in all the wards. At last I came out, and became acquainted with some sisters, three in number, enlisted in the service of heaven; and these three, together with a divine, freed me wholly from the yoke of the world and drew me out of the meshes of sin, and made me the Lord's own child.

BRAND. Really!

EJNAR. Our paths are different: one leads to the valley, the other to the hill.

BRAND. But since then?

EJNAR. Since? True. Then I became a Total Abstinence Preacher, but this sort of work is in some cases too beset with temptations; so I took to something else, and now I am travelling as a missionary—

BRAND. Whither?

EJNAR. To the land of the Caudate-Negroes. But we had better part—my time is precious—

BRAND. You will not stay, then? You see, there is a festival here to-day.

EJNAR. No thank you; my place is with dusky souls. Farewell! [*He is going.*]

BRAND. Have you no glimmer of memory that bids you stay, and ask—?

EJNAR. What for?

BRAND. For one who would grieve at the gulf between now and the last time—

EJNAR. I'm beginning to understand now. You're thinking, I suppose, of that young woman who held me in the net of desire before I got cleansed at the wash of faith. Ah, how is it with her?

BRAND. She became my wife the next year.

EJNAR. No matter. I have no concern for such things. The *one thing needful* is all I want to know.

BRAND. Our life together was richly blessed both with joy and sorrow. Our child died—

EJNAR. No matter—

BRAND. Ah well! It was lent rather than given, and the day of meeting will dawn some time. But afterwards she went herself. In here [*pointing to the churchyard*] their graves are growing green.

EJNAR. No matter—

BRAND. Nor that—

EJNAR. I do not ask for information about such things. I want to know *how* she died?

BRAND. With hope in the dawn of morning, with the heart's rich treasure untouched, with the will steadfast before the last long night, with thankfulness for all that life gave and took away—thus she went to her grave.

EJNAR. All that is but vanity and delusion. Tell me what was the outlook of her faith?

BRAND. Unmoved.

EJNAR. Upon whom?

BRAND. Upon God.

EJNAR. Alack! only upon Him? Then she is doomed.

BRAND. What do you say?

EJNAR. Damned, I am sorry to say.

BRAND. [*Quietly.*] Go, scoundrel!

EJNAR. The Prince of Darkness will get you, too, into his clutches. You'll die eternally as certainly as she.

BRAND. You, wretch, do you dare to condemn to the Pit. A little while ago you lay in the mire of sin yourself.

EJNAR. Not a speck cleaves to me. I have been washed at the laundry of faith; every splash of mire has been rubbed off on the washing-board of holiness. I have rinsed out my Adam garment with the aid of the mangle of watchfulness. I am white as a surplice, thanks to the use of the soapsuds of prayer.

BRAND. Silence!

EJNAR. Keep silence yourself! There's a smell of sulphur about you. I can catch a glimpse of the devil's horn. *I* am one of heaven's grains; you are chaff upon the Judgment shovel. [*He goes.*]

BRAND. [*He watches him going, for a moment, then suddenly his eyes flash and he bursts out:*] And *that* was the man I longed for! *Now* all my chains are broken; mine own flag shall wave over me, if not *one* will follow!

BAILLIE. [*Comes up in haste.*] My dear Parson, do make haste! The pro-

sion to the church is drawn up in
er and ready to start—

BRAND. Let them come.

BAILLIE. Without you! Just con-
er,—and make haste home. The peo-
will not wait any longer; the whole
ulation is pressing on and rushing
the Parsonage like a river at the
ing flood; they shout that they
see the Parson. Just listen! an-
er shout for the Parson! Make
te! I am almost afraid they will
ave in an inhumanitarian manner.

BRAND. I will never hide my head
ong your flock and following. I
y here.

BAILLIE. Are you mad?

BRAND. Your path is too narrow for

BAILLIE. It'll get narrower still, the
re the Populace presses on. Look,
word! there they go! The Provost
clergy and the other officials are
ng pushed on to the edge of the
e—; do come now, my good friend,
use your influence to whip them in.
, it's too late! They're breaking
n the barriers; the procession is go-
to pieces!

*The crowd streams in in wild con-
ion, and forces its way through the
orations up towards the church.*]

VOICES. Parson!

OTHER VOICES. [*People point to-
rds the steps of the church, where*
AND *is standing, and shout:*] There
is!

MORE VOICES. Give the signal for
opening!

PROVOST. [*Pressed in the crowd.*]
ed, keep them within bounds!

BAILLIE. They don't pay any heed
ny authority!

SCHOOLM. [*To* BRAND.] Speak to
them; cast a ray of light upon their restless hearts. Is what is *"doing"* here,—great, but disgraceful?

BRAND. Oh! then a current is coming at last over the dead calm in which the people lie! Men, you stand where the road divides! You must *will* with all your might that which is new,—the forsaking of all corrupt works,—before the great temple can be built as it must be, and shall!

OFFICIALS. The Parson's raving!

CLERGY. He is mad!

BRAND. True, I was, when I thought that somehow or other still you were serving Him Who willeth Spirit and Truth! Yes, I was, when I thought that I could link you to Him, by trifling and haggling. The old church was small, and I, coward that I was, drew this conclusion: double—that may be enough; fivefold—ah! *that* must do it! I saw not that the one thing needful was *'All or nothing.'* I vacillated upon the paths of compromise;—but to-day the Lord has spoken. This hour the trump of doom has sounded over the house,—and I listened in a whirlwind of fear.—I was crushed like David before Nathan—smitten and carried away by a blast of terror;—*now* all doubt is past. People! The spirit of compromise is Satan!

CROWD. [*With rising fermentation.*] Away with them, they have blinded us! Down with them, they have stolen the marrow from our bones!

BRAND. Behind each man of you dwells the foul fiend that has caught you in his bonds. You have juggled with your powers, cleft yourselves into two parts; therefore dispersion comes after, with all its horror and its hollowness. What want you with the

Church now? It is the show that attracts you,—the sound of the organ and the bells,—the pleasure of feeling the flame of high-sounding talk flicker through you, with its lispings and its whisperings, its floods and thunders and hailstones, according to all the rules of the art!

PROVOST. [*Aside.*] He's referring to the Baillie's chatter!

BAILLIE. [*Also aside.*] That's the Provost's twaddle he's sneering at!

BRAND. The tapers that are lit at the great, solemn Feast you only use for form's sake. Then you go home again in your sloth, home in your deafness to your toil and drudgery, your soul's clad like your bodies in working-breeches, while the Book of Life lies hidden and forgotten at the bottom of a chest until the next festival comes round. Oh, it was not *this* I dreamt of when I drained the Chalice of Sacrifice! I wanted to build the church *great,* so that its vault might overshadow not faith and doctrine only, but beyond, *everything* in life to which God has given the right to exist,—the daily strife from morning till night, from night till morning, the rest of evening, the sorrows of night, the fresh delights of youthful blood, everything, poor or precious, that the breast may lawfully harbour as its own.—The river that foams below there, the fall that roars in the cleft, the sounds from the lungs of the storm, the voices that ring from the sea, should be possessed by the soul and melt perfectly together with the music of the organ and the songs from the people's tongues. Away with the work done here! It is great only in lying illusion; in spriit it is already near its fall,—worthy of your wretched will. You want to suffocate every germ of aspiration with your divisions of labour; during the six week-days you haul down God's flag upon the deck, only on the seventh is it visible flying toward heaven!

VOICES FROM THE CROWD. Lead us! There is storm in the air! Lead us; with *you* we shall gain the victory!

PROVOST. Hear him not; he does not hold the faith as becomes a Christian!

BRAND. That's true, there you named the *flaw*—the flaw in both of us, the flaw in all this dispersion! Faith is possessed only by *Souls;* point me out *one* who is a soul! Point me out *one* who has not cast away his own best part in his groping and his hurrying! You have floundered after your inclinations, and kicked up your heels to the sound of jugglers' pipes until you are dulled to the joy of life! Not until your souls are dried up and wizen, do you dance your dance before the ark! It is cripples and idiots who drain the cup to the last drop,—*then* is your time for hope, *then* is your time for supplication with penance and prayer. First you grind the stamp off you, you live yourself into biped beasts;—then you resort to the door of mercy and seek God—invalided. If this is His Kingdom it must fall! What does He want with senile souls about His footstool? Has He not proclaimed it aloud, it is only when the blood spurts high through all the veins of the heart, that He chooses you for His inheritance—It is only as children that you can win the kingdom? No man can hobble in thither. Come, then, men and women both; show yourselves with fresh, children's faces in life's great Church!

BAILLIE. Open it then!

CROWD. [*Crying out as if in terror.*] , not that one!

BRAND. The Church has neither und nor limit. The floor is the green rth, the moorland, the meadow, the and the fjord; the heavens alone n span the vault, it grows so great. ere, shall all your work be *so* done, t the sound of it may be heard in e choir; there you can face your ily labour and yet break no sabbath. shall roof in *All* as the bark roofs the *All* of the tree in the trunk; life d faith shall melt together. It shall ept daily toil as in perfect unity th rule and doctrine. There shall the our of the day be *one* with flight ng the path of the stars, *one* with ldren's play round the Christmas- e, *one* with the king's dance before ark.

[*A storm seems to be passing rough the crowd; some turn away; majority gather close round* AND.]

THOUSANDS OF VOICES. Light is dled where before was darkness! e and the worship of God are *one!*

PROVOST. Alas! he entices our flock m us—Baillie, Judge, Constable, rk!

BAILLIE. [*In an undertone.*] In the il's name don't scream out like that! o would butt against a bull? Let n have his craze out!

BRAND. [*To the crowd.*] Away from s place! God is not here—*can* not among such men; the beauty of rty is the beauty of His kingdom! *e doublelocks the door of the rch, and takes the keys in his hand.*] am parson here no longer. I re- e my gift;—no man shall take the s from my hand for festival! [*He throws them into the river.*] If you want to get in, you earthy slave, creep in through the cellar-hole; your back is supple, bend and grovel; let your breath steal along the ground through the suffocating darkness, heavy with poison, like a feeble consumptive gasp!

BAILLIE. [*In a low voice and a relieved tone.*] Ah! there goes his knighthood!

PROVOST. [*In the same tone.*] Good! he'll never be a Bishop now!

BRAND. Come, those that are young among you—come, those that are strong! let a living breath blow from you the dust of this sultry hole. Follow me on my way to victory! One day you *must* awaken; one day, ennobled, you must break peace with Compromise;—arise from your miserable plight; arise out of your paralyzing incompleteness;—smite your enemy in the face; declare war against him to the death.

BAILLIE. Stop! I'll read the riot act.

BRAND. Read it! I break the covenant with you.

CROWD. Show us the way; we will follow.

BRAND. Over the frozen billows of the waste! We will pass through the land, loose every snare of the soul that the people sit captive in, purify, upraise, free, crush every fragment of sloth, be Men and Priests, stamp anew the worn-out die, roof in the kingdom for a temple!

[THE CROWD, *and amongst them the* CLERK *and the* SCHOOLMASTER, *throng around* BRAND. *He is lifted into the air on the men's shoulders.*]

MANY VOICES. The times are great! Great visions flash like lightning in the light of day!

[*The throng streams upwards through the valley; a few remain behind.*]

PROVOST. [*To the men who are marching away.*] Oh, you blinded men, what will you do? Do you not see that the wiles of Satan lurk in all his words?

BAILLIE. Heigh there! Turn back, the smooth, quiet course of your own Commune is what suits you; stop, good people,—you're going to your ruin!—H'm, they pay no heed, the hounds!

PROVOST. Think of your houses and homes.

VOICES FROM THE CROWD. A greater house shall be raised!

BAILLIE. Think of your fields and meadows; think of your sheep and cattle!

VOICES. The dew of heaven yielded manna before, when the Chosen People were hungry!

BAILLIE. Your wives are screaming behind you.

VOICES. [*Far off.*] Those who waver we know not.

BAILLIE. Your children cry: "Father has left us!"

THE WHOLE CROWD. Either with us or against us!

PROVOST. [*Looks for a moment after them with folded hands, and says dejectedly:*] The old shepherd of the Parish is overwhelmed with his bereavement, robbed of his flock, plundered to his very shirt.

BAILLIE. [*Shaking his fist after* BRAND.] The shame is *his;* the disgrace is *his.* The victory, Herr Provost, will soon be ours!

PROVOST. [*Ready to cry.*] The victory? They have marched away from us!

BAILLIE. Yes, but if I know my sheep, we're not beaten. [*He follows the crowd.*]

PROVOST. Where in the world is the Baillie going? After them, as sure as I'm alive! Ha, my spirits are rising again. I will go up too, make a raid on the mob, and take some prisoners. Saddle me my nag;—no get me a safe mare used to the fells! [*They go.*]

SCENE—*By the highest dairy farm in the neighbourhood. The landscape rises in the background, and ends in great barren moors. It is raining.*

BRAND, *followed by the crowd*—MEN, WOMEN *and* CHILDREN,—*is coming up over the slopes.*

BRAND. Look onwards; thither victory wings its flight; the homesteads lie locked in the hollow, and the rain has spread over it a tent of mist from fell to fell. Forget your lethargy, leave it in your gloomy homes; fly free, fly high, Men of the Lord!

MAN. Wait, wait; my old father is weary.

ANOTHER. I have had nothing to eat all day—

SEVERAL. Yes, satisfy our hunger and quench our thirst!

BRAND. Onward, on over the fell first!

SCHOOLM. By what road?

BRAND. One road is as good as another, if only it leads to the goal. Follow me, this way—

MAN. No, it's steep; we shall not get to the top before night!

CLERK. And the ice-church lies up there.

BRAND. The steep way is the short way.

WOMAN. My child is sick!

ANOTHER. My foot is sore.

THIRD. Where am I to find a drop quench my thirst?

SCHOOLM. Satisfy the people, Par-; you see, their courage is waver-.

MANY VOICES. Work a miracle, Par-, work a miracle!

BRAND. Oh, your thraldom has nded you with a foul mark: you nt the wage before the work. Up, ke off your deathly dulness—or sink k again into your grave!

SCHOOLM. Yes, he is right; on to the fe first; we know well we shall have reward afterwards!

BRAND. You will, men, as true as re is a God, who watches the whole rld with keen eyes.

MANY VOICES. He prophesies! he phesies!

OTHER VOICES. Look here, Parson, us,—will the strife be hot?

OTHERS. And will it be long? And l it be bloody?

MAN. Parson, shall we need cou-e?

SCHOOLM. [*In an undertone.*] I uld like to be certain of my life.

ANOTHER MAN. What will be my re of the spoils of victory?

WOMAN. You're sure I shan't lose son?

CLERK. Will the victory be ours be-e Tuesday?

BRAND. [*Looking round at the crowd ildered.*] What is it you are ask-? What do you seek to know?

CLERK. First, how long we shall have ight;—then, our loss in the fight, lastly—the reward of our victory.

BRAND. That is what you ask?

SCHOOLM. It is; we didn't get a full ount of the matter down below.

BRAND. [*Agitated.*] Then you shall have one now!

CROWD. [*Crowding closer together.*] Speak! speak!

BRAND. How long will the struggle last? It will last until the end of life, till you have sacrificed your *All*, and freed yourselves from the bond of Compromise;—till you have the Will completely in hand;—till all your timorous questioning has given way before the commandment: "All or nothing." And your loss in the struggle? All your idols, all the spirits of incompleteness that are your heirlooms, every glittering golden chain of thraldom, every pillow to your apathy! And the reward of victory? The cleansing of the Will soaring faith, unity in the soul,—that readiness for sacrifice which gave with joy, even unto death and the grave,—for each man's brows a crown of thorns,—these shall be your spoils.

THE CROWD. [*Amid furious cries.*] Betrayed! deceived! defrauded!

BRAND. I have not gone back from my word.

SEVERAL VOICES. You promised us victory within our grasp;—and now you want to turn it into sacrifice!

BRAND. I promised you victory, and I swear it shall be won through you. But he who marches in the first rank must fall for the glory of his cause; if he dares not do that, then let him lay down his weapons before the day of battle. The flag that is defended by a feeble Will is doomed to fall into the enemies' hands; if thou art paralyzed with the dread of sacrifice, thou art marked for death, before thou art struck.

CROWD. You dare to demand our

own ruin for the good of a race unborn!

BRAND. The way to our Canaan leads through the wild deserts of sacrifice. On, and conquer by your fall! I raise every single man of you to be Knights of the Lord!

CLERK. I say, we're in a pretty mess! We're under the ban in the valley—

SCHOOLM. We can never go back there.

CLERK. And on—no one wants to go on!

SOME VOICES. Beat him to death!

SCHOOLM. No, that would make matters worse. We *must* have a master.

SOME WOMEN. [*Pointing in terror along the road.*] Hi! the Provost!

SCHOOLM. Now, don't get frightened.

PROVOST. [*Followed by some of the people who had remained behind.*] Oh, My children! Oh, My flock! Listen to the old shepherd's voice.

SCHOOLM. [*To the crowd.*] We have no longer a home in the valley; we had better go on over the moors!

PROVOST. Oh, how can you cause me such heavy sorrow, and wound my heart so deeply!

BRAND. Year after year thou didst wound Souls.

PROVOST. Don't listen to him! He entices you with empty promises.

SEVERAL VOICES. That's true!

PROVOST. But we are indulgent, we forgive where we have found sincere repentance. Oh, look within yourselves before it is too late, and see the black, hellish arts with which he gathered the people about him.

MANY VOICES. Yes, that's certain; he bewitched us!

PROVOST. And consider; what power have you, a poor little flock, born in a corner? Are you chosen for any great work? Can you set free those that are bound? You have your little daily duties; whatever is beyond that, is evil. Can your arm prevail on the battle-field? You must protect your humble homes. How will you fare among eagles and falcons? How will you fare among wolves and bears? You will only become the prey of those that are stronger than you.—Oh, My children! —Oh, My lambs!

CROWD. Ah, woe to us! those are true words!

CLERK. And yet when we left the valley we shut the cottage-doors behind us; there is no home for us there now as there used to be.

SCHOOLM. Nay, he has enlightened the people's eyes; he has pointed to their flaws and their sickness and their lying. The People sleep no longer, the life that was sufficient for us before has become lifeless to this awakened flock.

PROVOST. Ah, believe me, that will soon pass over. Everything will settle down again in the old grooves, if only you will keep quiet for a little. I will answer for it, the People will soon feel as peaceful as before.

BRAND. Choose, men and women!

SOME VOICES. We will go home!

OTHERS. Too late! Too late! on over the moors!

BAILLIE. [*Coming up in haste.*] It's a stroke of luck I've found you!

WOMEN. Oh, dear kind Sir, don't be angry!

BAILLIE. No, no, not this time—only come with me! Better times are dawning for the Commune. If you'll only

sensible and listen to reason, you'll be rich men before tonight.

SEVERAL VOICES. How?

BAILLIE. There's a shoal of fish in fjord,—by millions!

CROWD. What does he say?

BAILLIE. Everything in good order! ave the moorland, with its storms l sleet and frost. A shoal of fish never borne this way before. At , my friends, a better time is dawn- for our part of the north!

BRAND. Choose between his call and Lord's!

BAILLIE. Follow your own common- se!

PROVOST. A miracle has taken place sign sent from heaven! Ah, I have amt it often and often, but I ught it was a nightmare;—now we see clearly what it points to—

BRAND. If you yield, you lose *your- es!*

MANY VOICES. A shoal of fish!

BAILLIE. Millions!

PROVOST. Food and wealth for your dren and wives!

BAILLIE. You must see now that this not the time for wasting your ngth in strife, especially against a nger power,—it makes even the r Provost himself disheartened. you have another goal in view in- d of vainly hankering after the vens. The Lord is well able to pro- Himself; the vaults of heaven are ly established. Don't mix yourselves n other people's quarrels, but make e to lighten the sea of its treasures. re's a practical occupation for you e carried on without blood or steel, that brings you substantial pros- ty and requires no personal sacri-

BRAND. It is *that* Sacrifice which stands written in fire behind the cloud-rift, as the Lord's Demand.

PROVOST. Ah, if you feel an inclination for sacrifice, just come in all confidence to me some fine day—say next Sunday. My word! I'll—

BAILLIE. [*Interrupting.*] Yes, yes!

CLERK. [*In a low tone to the* PROVOST.] Shall I keep my place as Clerk?

SCHOOLM. [*In the same tone.*] Will the school be taken from me?

PROVOST. [*Quietly.*] If you were to shake the obstinacy of the mob, no doubt you would be leniently—

BAILLIE. Away, away; don't waste the time!

CLERK. To the boats, all of you who are wise men!

SOME. But the Parson—?

CLERK. The Parson! Leave the lunatic!

SCHOOLM. In this, you see the words of the Lord, as it were stamped in an open book.

BAILLIE. Leave the Parson; it's your bounden duty; he fooled you with tales and nonsense.

SEVERAL VOICES. He lied to us!

PROVOST. His belief is false; and, fancy! he did not even get a "laudabilis" degree.

SOME VOICES. *What* has he got?

BAILLIE. An indifferent character!

CLERK. Yes, that's true; we can see that plainly.

PROVOST. His old mother waited for him in vain; he refused her the sacrament.

BAILLIE. He almost took his own child's life!

CLERK. And his wife's too!

WOMEN. Shame on him, the wretch!

PROVOST. A bad son, a bad father,

and a bad husband!—Could you find a worse Christian than that?

MANY VOICES. He pulled our old church down!

OTHER VOICES. He hampered the lock of the new one!

MORE VOICES. He lashed us to a sinking plank!

BAILLIE. He stole my idea for the mad-house!

BRAND. I see the mark on each man's brow. I see where this race will land.

WHOLE CROWD. [*Roaring out.*] Hi! don't listen to him! Drive the hell-brand out of the place with knives and stones.

[*They drive* BRAND *inland over the waste, throwing stones at him. Gradually his pursuers turn back.*]

PROVOST. Oh, My children! Oh, My lambs! Return now to your own firesides; let repentance enlighten your eyes, and you will see that all will be well. Our Lord, you know, is so good: He desireth not the blood of the guiltless;—and our government also is so indulgent, more so almost than in any other country; and the Magistrates, the High Sheriff, the Baillie, will not be hard upon you; and I myself am as kind as the humanitarian Christianity of our times demands;—your authorities will all dwell together with you in peace and prosperity.

BAILLIE. But if we should find any breach, it must be healed, of course. As soon as we get a little settled, we will choose a Commission, to inquire to what extent improvement can be made in the matter of belief and enlightenment. It must consist of some clergymen, whom I and the Provost will invite, and also, if you like, of the Parish Clerk and the Schoolmaster, with others taken from the popular class,—so you can safely rest content.

PROVOST. Yes, we will relieve you of all your burdens, as you have relieved your old shepherd of his fear to-day. Let everyone be encouraged by the thought that a wonderful work has been wrought for us. Farewell! and good luck to your fishing!

CLERK. Ah, *there* are men for you full of Christian kindness!

SCHOOLM. They go their way with such quiet unobtrusiveness.

SOME WOMEN. They are so clever and nice!

OTHERS. Such truly popular manners!

CLERK. *They* don't ask for mortal wounds!

SCHOOLM. They are men who know something besides the Lord's Prayer.

[*The crowd moves on downwards.*]

PROVOST. [*To the* BAILLIE.] Ah, that will improve the tone. Now, there's a thorough revulsion of feeling at hand; for there *is* such a thing, thank God, as reaction.

BAILLIE. It was *my* doing, that the whole uproar was strangled at its birth.

PROVOST. Ah, we have that miracle to thank most—

BAILLIE. What miracle?

PROVOST. The shoal of fish.

BAILLIE. [*Whistling.*] That was a lie, of course!

PROVOST. What! a lie?

BAILLIE. I seized upon whatever rubbish came first to my lips;—there can't be any harm in it, for such a worthy object?

PROVOST. No, God bless me! in a case of necessity it is quite excusable.

BAILLIE. And, besides, in four-and-twenty hours' time, when the people

e quieted down again, what will it
tter then whether the victory was
n by means of truth or lies?

ROVOST. I am no rigorist, my friend.
e looks inland over the waste.]
y, is not that Brand toiling along
der?

AILLIE. Yes, it certainly is!—A
ely warrior on his progress!

ROVOST. No; stop! surely I can see
eone else as well—a long way be-
d him!

AILLIE. Why; it's *Gerd!* His fol-
ing's worthy of him!

ROVOST. [*Facetiously.*] When his
ging for sacrifice is satisfied, he
ht to have an epitaph like this:
ere rests Brand; His victory was
ll; He won one soul,—and she was
."

AILLIE. [*With his finger on his*
e.] H'm! but when I come to think
ver seriously, it does occur to me
the people's judgment was not
e humanitarian.

ROVOST. [*Shrugging his shoulders.*]
x populi vox dei." Come! [*They*

CENE—*In the midst of the great*
rland. A storm is gathering, driv-
the clouds slowly over the snow-
s; black peaks and summits stand
here and there, and then are veiled
n in mist. BRAND *is going inland*
the fell; he is bruised and bleed-

RAND. [*Stopping and looking back.*]
housand people followed me from
valley; not *one* has gained the
hts. The craving for greater times
ks in every heart; the summons to
for the high combat sinks into
y soul. Ah, but the sacrifice! it is
which terrifies them! the Will
hides itself, weak and afraid:—*One,* forsooth, died for all,—so cowardice is no longer sin! [*He sinks down on a stone and looks round him timidly.*]

I could not help shuddering continually; the terror shivered in my hair as I passed through their howls and hooting as a child passes through a dark, haunted room. But I forced down the beating of my heart, and took comfort from the thought: "Without glows the day-spring; this darkness is not night, nor evening,—it is only the shutter before the window." And I thought: "The daylight and the clear glow of the summer will soon cast their full fair stream through the doorway into the dark, haunted room."

Oh, how bitterly I deceived myself! Night, pitchblack, rose up against me; —and without sat men by creek and fjord, dispersed, clinging to memories and forgetful of their spirit, hoarding them like the king who year after year hoarded his Snefrid's corpse, loosened the corner of her shroud and listened over her heart and fed on crumbs of hope that she still lived, thinking to herself: "Now at last the blood's red roses have shot forth from the dead." But not *one* of these men has arisen as he arose and yielded the grave its demands. Not *one* among them knows—that the corpse is not *dreamed* back to life—that the corpse must go down into the earth—that the mission of the corpse is but to nourish the newsown seed.—Night, nothing but night,—and night once more, over men, women and children! Would that I could take lightning in mine hand, and save them from the agony of dying in their beds! [*He springs up.*]

I see dark visions course like a hell-

hunt through the night. The times are clad for storm; they conjure us to a deed that will require our life, they crave the brandishing of steel for a staff, and the emptying of the scabbard on the hip:—I see enemies sally forth to the fight,—I see brethren sit meek and cringing under the cap of invisibility. And I see still more,—all their shuddering wretchedness,—the whimpering of women, and the cries of men, and ears deaf to prayer and entreaty,—I see them grave upon their foreheads the name of poor shore-dwellers, people coined groats by God. They are pale as they listen to the crash, and think their self-wrought impotence will screen them. O flag, thou rainbow floating over the fields in May, where art thou to be seen now? Where are the three colours now, that beat and chafed from the mast, before the storm of the nation's song, till a king and a zealot split and cut a tongue in the flag? Thou didst use thy tongue for boasting; no need for the points of a split flag, if the dragon dare not show his fangs! The nation's cry might have been silent, and the king's shears might have waited; a flag with the four corners of peace is sufficient for a danger-signal when some stranded craft capsizes!

Worse times, worse visions, flash like lightning through the night of the future! The suffocating British coal-smoke sinks black over the land, smirches all the fresh green, stifles all the fair shoots, sweeps low over the land, mingled with poisonous matter; steals the sun and the daylight from the country places, and drips down like the rain of ashes on the doomed city of old.—Now, the race has grown ill-favoured;—through the crooked passages of the mine wails the droning dripping water;—the herd of mannikins, busy and self-satisfied, set free the fettered prisoners of the ore, walking with soul and back hunched, glaring like dwarfs with greedy eyes after the glittering, lying gold. Their souls give forth no cry, their mouths smile not, a brother's fall wounds not their hearts, their own rouses no lion within them;—they hammer, file, and coin. The last trace of light has fled; the race has become a people forgetful that the work of the Will ends not however much power fail.

Worse times, worse visions, flash like lightning through the night of the future! The wolf of cunning howls and yelps, menacing the sun of Wisdom upon the earth; a cry of distress sounds northward, and summons to arms along the fjord; the clammy dwarf hisses sullenly;—such things are no concern of *his:* "Let the *strong* communities kindle into flame; let *others* defend the cause;—we cannot afford to give our blood; we are small, we husband our powers for a real call upon them; we cannot sacrifice the welfare of a people, as our contribution towards the world's redemption. The chalice was not drunk for *us,* the crown of thorns did not drive its fangs into His temples for *us,* the Roman's lance was not plunged into the Dead Man's side for *us,* it was not for *our* sake that the nails seared Him as they pierced His feet and hands. We are small, the last in account; we defy the summons to arms. The Cross was not borne for us! the stirrup-wound, the blow of Ahasuerus, that stained the Doomed Man's shoulder with a purple stream,

enough share of His Passion for
' [*He throws himself down in the*
w and covers his face; in a little
le he looks up.]
Have I been dreaming? Have I but
awakened? Everything is gray and
den in mist. Were those only a sick
n's vision that I have seen until
? Is the likeness wherein man's
was fashioned marred and forgot-
? Is the spirit of the Beginning of
conquered? [*Listening.*] There is
ound like singing in the air.
NSEEN CHOIR. [*Murmuring amid*
storm.] Never, never wilt thou be
Him, for thou art fashioned in
flesh. Do His will or forsake Him,
ertheless thou art lost!
RAND. [*Takes up the words and*
s softly.] Woe is me! woe is me!
an almost believe it. Did He not
d in the choir of the Church and
my words from Him in wrath with
hand? Has He not taken all I
e? has He not barred all the pas-
s of light? has He not let me fight
to the last? has He not left me to
er defeat?
HOIR. [*Sounding louder above*
.] Worm! thou wilt never be like
; thou hast drained the chalice of
h. Follow after Him or desert
, nevertheless thy work is doomed!
RAND. [*Calmly.*] Agnes, Alf, those
ht days, the restful, peaceful life—
artered all for strife and tumult.
ent my breast with the shafts of
ifice, and yet I could not slay the
gon that preys upon the people.
HOIR. [*Kindly and persuasively.*]
amer, thou wilt never be like Him,
hast lost thine heritage and thy
right; all thy sacrifice does not
make Him rich;—thou wast made for
thine own earth-life.

BRAND. [*Bursting into silent tears.*] Alf and Agnes, come back! I sit lonely on the peak; the north wind blows through me; I am seized by spectres, whose kindness chills—!

[*He looks up; there is a faint opening in the mist; it widens, and* THE FIGURE OF A WOMAN *appears, clad in shining garments with a cloak over her shoulders. It is* AGNES.]

FIGURE. [*Smiling and stretching out its arms towards him.*] Brand, I have come to thee again.

BRAND. [*Starting up bewildered.*] Agnes, Agnes! What is this?

FIGURE. Husband, it was all a feverish dream! *Now* the sickly vapors will lift!

BRAND. Agnes, Agnes! [*He hastens towards her.*]

FIGURE. [*Screams.*] Come not over! Look, between us is a great gulf! Between us flows the wild dark stream. [*Gently.*] Thou art not dreaming; thou dost not sleep; thou art no longer fighting with visions. Thou hast been sick, *dear,* hast drunk the bitter drink of madness, hast dreamt thy wife had gone from thee.

BRAND. Oh, thou livest! Praise be to—

FIGURE. [*Hastily.*] Hush! talk of that later! Follow me, follow me; the time is short!

BRAND. Oh, but Alf?

FIGURE. He too is not dead.

BRAND. He is alive?

FIGURE. He is alive and healthful and ruddy. Thou hast dreamt all thy sorrows; all thy struggle was only delusion. Alf is with thine old mother; she is hale, and he has grown tall. The

Parish church still stands; it can be pulled down if thou wilt. The people of the Parish toil on, down yonder, just as they did in the good old days.

BRAND. "Good"?

FIGURE. Yes; then there was peace.

BRAND. "Peace"?

FIGURE. Oh, hasten, Brand; come with me!

BRAND. Ah, I am dreaming!

FIGURE. *Now* thou art dreaming no longer. But thou needest care and shelter—

BRAND. I am strong.

FIGURE. Ah! not yet; behind thee lowers the horror of thy dream. It will overcloud thee again and thou wilt slip away from my side and the child's; thy mind will grow dull again,—if thou dost not make trial of the remedy.

BRAND. Oh, give it me!

FIGURE. Thou thyself art the man. Thou alone canst do it, and none other.

BRAND. Speak the word.

FIGURE. The aged leech,—he who has read so many books, he whose cunning is so deep, has found the clue to thy sickness. All these fell and pallid spectres can be laid with *three words.* Those words thou must cross out boldly, erase from the page of thy memory, strike from the table of thy law. They have caused this sickness to fall upon thee like a storm that drives men mad. Forget them, forget them, if thou wilt wash thy soul clean from sickness and disease!

BRAND. Speak them!

FIGURE. *"All or Nothing!"*

BRAND. [*Recoiling.*] Are *those* the words?

FIGURE. As sure as I live, and as sure as thou wilt one day die.

BRAND. Woe to us both; the drawn sword hangs over us as it hung before.

FIGURE. Brand, be merciful; my embrace is loving; hold me in thy strong arms;—let us go, and seek the sun and the summer—

BRAND. The sickness will not come again.

FIGURE. Ah, it *will* come, Brand, be sure of that.

BRAND. [*Shaking his head.*] It is cast behind my back. No horror of wild dreams—the Horrors of *Life* come now!

FIGURE. Of *Life?*

BRAND. Follow me, Agnes.

FIGURE. Stop! Brand, what wilt thou?

BRAND. What I must: *live* what until now I *dreamt*—make *real,* what is still delusion.

FIGURE. Impossible! Think whither the way led thee.

BRAND. I will pass over it again!

FIGURE. That terrible ride amid the mists of dreams—wilt thou ride it free and awake?

BRAND. Free and awake.

FIGURE. And leave the child?

BRAND. And leave the child.

FIGURE. Brand!

BRAND. I must.

FIGURE. Tear me bleeding from the net? Beat me to death with the scourge of sacrifice?

BRAND. I *must.*

FIGURE. Quench every light in darkness, shut out the sunbeams, never pluck the fruits of life, never be soothed and cheered by its music—? and I remember so much!

BRAND. I *must.* Waste not thy prayer.

FIGURE. Dost thou forget the reward of thy sacrifice? All thy hopes

up-lifting deceived thee, everyone erted thee, everyone beat thee!

BRAND. I suffer not for mine own vard; I strive not for mine own vic-y.

FIGURE. —for a people in the pas-es of a mine?

BRAND. *One* can give light to many.

FIGURE. —whose generations to ne are doomed.

BRAND. The Will of *one* avails much.

FIGURE. But remember, *one* with a ning rod drove man out of Para-e! He has laid before the door a f;—over that gulf thou wilt not o!

BRAND. He left a way open, the way the Will.

FIGURE. [*Disappears with a crash; mist rolls over the place where it od; a shrill and piercing cry is rd, as if from one in flight.*] Die! e world has no use for thee!

BRAND. [*Standing for a moment as stunned.*] It has swept away amid clouds of mist; it has flown over wastes like a hawk on its great, gh wings. It begged for my little er, in order that it might clutch my ble hand. *That* was the Spirit of mpromise!

GERD. [*With a rifle in her hand.*] you see the hawk? Did you see the k?

BRAND. Yes, Gerd; this time I saw .

GERD. Quick, tell me which way he flown; we will be after him, and h him up!

BRAND. No weapon can harm him; letimes he seems to fly as if struck the heart with a fatal bullet,—but you think to deal him his death-blow, he is after you as bold as ever, fooling and bewitching you afresh.

GERD. I stole the reindeer-hunter's rifle, and have loaded it with steel and silver; trust me, I'm not so mad as I'm said to be!

BRAND. May you hit your mark! [*He is going.*]

GERD. Parson, why, you halt on one foot! What is the cause of that?

BRAND. The People hunted me.

GERD. [*Going near.*] Your temples are red as blood from the heart's roots.

BRAND. The People beat me.

GERD. Before, there was music in your voice;—now it rattles like the leaves in autumn.

BRAND. Every man and everything—

GERD. What?

BRAND. —deceived me.

GERD. [*Staring at him.*] Ha!—now at last I know you. I thought you were the parson;—Out upon him and all the rest! You are the *Man,* and the *Greatest* of men.

BRAND. In my wickedness, I almost thought so.

GERD. Let me look at your hands!

BRAND. My hands?

GERD. Wounded with nails! I see drops of blood upon your hair;—gnawed with the thorn-fangs;—deep, cruel cuts upon your brow. Verily *Thou* hast borne the wood of the cross! Father said, when I was little, that it was done a long while ago, far away from here, and by some other men;—I see now he was deceiving me;—*Thou* art the Saviour!

BRAND. Get thee hence!

GERD. Shall I fall down and pray before Thy feet?

BRAND. Hence!

GERD. Ah! Thou hast wasted the

blood that has power to redeem mankind.

BRAND. I!—who can find no plank to save mine own poor soul.

GERD. Here is the rifle; let us kill them—!

BRAND. [*Shaking his head.*] A man shall struggle on, to his fall.

GERD. *Thou* must not; Thou art our leader! In Thine hands are the nail holes; Thou art elect; Thou art the *Greatest* of men.

BRAND. I am the wretchedest insect in the earth.

GERD. [*Looking upwards; the clouds are lifting.*] Do you know where you are standing?

BRAND. [*Staring straight in front of him.*] I am standing on the first step of the stair; the ascent is long and my feet are sore.

GERD. [*More wildly.*] Answer me! Do you know where you are standing?

BRAND. Yes, the cloak of mist is falling now.

GERD. Yes, it is falling. Svartetind points right up into heaven!

BRAND. [*Looking up.*] Svartetind? The ice church!

GERD. Yes! You are a church-goer still!

BRAND. Would I were a thousand miles away!—Oh, how intensely I long for light and sun and soothing, for the solemn stillness of peace, for the summer realms of life. [*He bursts into tears.*] Jesus, I have called upon Thy name; Thou hast never taken me to Thine embrace; Thou hast glided close by me, like a familiar word upon the tongue; let me now take hold of one poor corner of the garment of redemption wet with this true wine of repentance.

GERD. [*Pale.*] What is it? You weep—you—hot tears, till your cheeks steam;—hot tears, till the brae's grave-cloth steals dripping down from top and peak;—hot tears, till the ice in my memory is thawing into tears within me;—hot tears, till the Mass-cloak slips down the sides of the glacier priest—! [*Trembling.*] Man, why have you never wept before?

BRAND. [*Serene and radiant, as if his youth were renewed.*] The time of frost endures throughout the Law;—at last the summer sun streams from on high! Until to-day my aim was to become a table whereon God could write; from to-day my life's register must bend, and melt, and overflow. The crust is breaking. I can weep; I can kneel down; I can pray. [*He falls on his knees.*]

GERD. [*Glances up, and says, in a low, frightened tone.*] Look, there he sits, the brute! That is he casting the shadow; there he is, scourging the sides of the peak with his broad wings. Now the hour of deliverance is near—if only the silver bites!

[*She puts up the stock of the rifle to her cheek and fires; a hollow roar, like a peal of thunder, sounds high up from the sheer bluff of the mountain.*]

BRAND. [*Starting up.*] What are you about?

GERD. He's hit! he's slipping down! I hit him. Look, he falls! Listen, he screeches till the echoes ring again! Thousands of feathers from his hide float down from the crest of the bluff. Look, how great and white he grows! Heigh! at last he comes rolling down!

BRAND. [*Shrinking*] Yes, every son of the race must be doomed for the sin of the race.

GERD. The tent of heaven stretches
tenfold wider since he has been
in! Look, he tumbles and rolls—Ah!
shall shudder no more. Why, he is
white as a dove—! [*She screams in
ror.*] Oh, the horrid, horrid roar!
he throws herself down in the snow.]
BRAND. [*Sinking down before the
hing avalanche, and looking up-
wards.*] Answer me, O God, in the
gulf of Death!—Can not the "quantum satis" of man's Will merit a particle of redemption—?

[*The avalanche buries him; the whole valley is filled.*]

VOICE. [*Crying through the thunder.*] He is "deus caritatis"!

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